

Hurrah for the centenarians!

There will be plenty to cheer this year with the Olympics and the Diamond Jubilee celebrations for H.M The Queen, diverting us from the gloom on the economic and jobs front. But there's something else we'll be welcoming and that's the great news : **Ten million people alive today will live to be 100 or more years old.**

And this includes 1.3 million of us who are already aged between 51 and 63. The statistics from the Department of Work and Pensions make wonderful news for families, but they are all too familiar and frightening for the politicians, economists and actuaries who have to live with the consequences and are among those who fail to cheer because they are doing all too little to meet this new phenomenon.

Ten million people are now aged 65 and over in the UK. By 2034, 23% of the population will be over 65 and of them 3.5 million will be over 85.

In 1911 there were just 100 centenarians living in England and Wales, a figure which grew to 9,000 in 2006 and represented a 90-fold increase over the previous 100 years. There was a four-teen-fold increase in male centenarians and a 23-fold increase in female centenarians over the last 50 years of the 20th century.

The number of people aged over 100 is expected to nearly double between 2030 and 2035, when it is projected there will be 97,300 centenarians in the UK. It is then expected to more than double again during the next decade, to stand at 202,100 by 2045.

The Office of National Statistics estimates that by 2066 there will be at least 507,000 people in the UK aged 100 or over, including 7,700 super centenarians who are aged 110 or over. By 2080, there may be 626,900 people aged over 100. 21,000 of these will be over 110.

Even the conservative estimates for the growth in the number of the oldest old will have a significant impact on services. Yet whilst policy makers seem aware of the growth in the number of people living to 100, there has been little or no explicit exploration about the impact of the growth in numbers of the oldest old on public policy.

The International Longevity Centre UK has studied this massive achievement in ageing and concludes that centenarians represent one of the fastest growing, although least understood, sections of the population.

They want to see more understanding and research undertaken into the health and social care, housing and wealth, quality of life, housing and the impact of disability on the oldest old and whether they will live to be centenarians – which will create its own impact on society.

Is anyone out there, for example, considering that centenarians are the most likely of any group to be living in residential care and to have exhausted their financial resources to pay for a long stay?

Or put another way, how can we make sure that the increase in life expectancy by centenarians and the oldest old will be matched by an increase in healthy life expectancy, now only considered to be enjoyed until the age of 63 – after that too often it is just more pills and potions!

It is not as though the politicians are unaware of these developments. Professor Tom Kirkwood, director of Newcastle University's Institute of Ageing and Health and one of the world's leading experts

"Old age is not a condition you cure. Scientific advances will not find miracle cures that reduce the incidence of old age," - Baroness Joan Bakewell, the "voice of the elderly" appointed by the last government.

in this field says:

"Human life expectancy continues to increase at the rate of two or more years per decade – or an amazing five hours each day. People often say that how long and healthy they will live is all determined by their genes.

"This leads to the fatalistic attitude that the body is programmed to age and die, driven by some inner biological clock. In fact, genetics accounts only for about a quarter of what determines the length of life.

"Three-quarters is controlled by factors that are under individual control, such as nutrition and lifestyle, says Professor Kirkwood.

And the final word comes from Yale University's Dr Becca Levy urging us to be positive about ageing health. Challenge the negative messages spreading alarm and despondency about ageing. Find ways of being useful to others. Help your friends deal with any problems. Help an organisation to meet the needs of your community.

By making a contribution to the wellbeing of others, a contribution will be made to your own wellbeing, says Dr Levy.

Big blast from the Mail

Under the banner headline: **"Frozen to death as fuel bills soar,"** the Daily Mail reported on 13 February that hypothermia cases among the elderly had doubled in five years. Official figures revealed after several days of Arctic conditions showed that 1,876 patients were treated in hospital for hypothermia in 2010/11, up from 950 in 2006/7

The number of sufferers who died within 30 days of admission shot up from 135 to 260. Three quarters of admissions were pensioners. **"The increasing toll of hypothermia over the past five years coincides with a surge in energy costs, especially gas prices which have gone up by 40 percent,"** said the Daily Mail.

Keep warm pull-out see centre pages

Social care a priority call

With perfect timing, the new Judi Dench / Maggie Smith film: *The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel* about sending older people to a ramshackle retirement home in India coincides with a renewed debate about funding long-term social care in England.

While the idea of “outsourcing” oldies abroad to save money has not so far been mooted, we await the promised White Paper from the government – which may even be the result of all-party agreement. Meanwhile, the National Pensioners’ Convention to which the Forum is affiliated - has launched a *Fair Care Campaign* which calls for:

- Creating a National Care Service alongside the NHS, funded by general taxation and based on care needs rather than ability to pay.
- Assessments to determine need carried out by medical and social care professionals.
- Introduction of the Dignity Code reproduced in the January/February Newsletter to protect people less able to care for themselves.

To support the above campaign, the NPC is calling a national lobby of Parliament on March 20 with a rally from 1- 3 pm in Committee Room 14 at the House of Commons.

Age UK has launched a *Care in Crisis* petition aiming for 100,000 signatures and Forum executive member Bill Mackay is setting the pace by collecting 102 signatures at ASDA in Southgate (petition sheets available at the office and Forum meetings). The petition calls for:

- Everyone who needs care should receive it
- No-one should be forced to sell their home or sacrifice their savings to pay for it
- People should be able to plan for care in advance.

Age UK estimates that the total amount spent on older people’s social care last year was £7.3 billion – a 4.5% decrease from the previous year. The number of older people in England with care related needs is about two million and projected to increase as the population gets older.

The number of people receiving care services has been decreasing, despite the growth in need - on average by 42,000 a year - as 82% of local councils restrict access to those with “critical” or “substantial” needs. And you need to be very dependent indeed before you qualify for help.

It is estimated that one third of men and half of all women have a significant care need at some time during their retirement, hence the need for a better care system in the 21st Century.

On Tuesday 6 March, Age UK, as part of the Care and Support Alliance, is holding a mass lobby in parliament to tell MPs the care system is in crisis and to challenge MPs to deliver urgent lasting reform.

Age UK has booked out Westminster Hall and will be registering people at Church House first. The day runs from 10am to 5.30pm but you are not required to be there for the whole day. For more call 020 303 31436.

Sayings to remember

I get up, drink my usual four coffees, have a look at the obituaries in The Times and if I’m not in them, I’ll get on with the day’s work – **Sir Patrick Moore**, astronomer, describes his morning routine.

Marriage is the alliance of two people, one of whom never remembers a birthday, and the other who never forgets them – **Ogden Nash**.

Vision without action is a daydream. Action without vision is a nightmare – **Japanese proverb**.

Visit Dugdale for advice

The Forum’s free and confidential advice surgery is open every Monday morning from 10am to 12noon. Here you will find a fully-trained retired Inspector of Taxes; a Citizens Advice Bureau adviser and an LBE officer who can help with council tax and housing benefit queries. The team includes Enfield Council’s jobs broker who can guide you on where to look for jobs and help with your CV etc.

The Forum’s advice surgery is also offering:

- * **free 15-minute legal advice by solicitors Stennett and Stennett**
- * **Pensions, disabilities and carers advice by appointment**
- * **Log your Trading Standards and GLA constituency questions.**

All in pleasant, relaxed surroundings. Just drop-in with your enquiry. Or, if you are in the vicinity, pop in for a cup of tea and a chat. We’d love to see you. Call the Over 50s Forum office for further details 020 8807 2076.

Thanks to Polly and Mina

By the time this Newsletter reaches you, it will be a case of all change at the Forum’s busy office. Our two part-time staff, Polly Lawman and Mina Shah, have both departed for pastures new. Mina left at the turn of the year and Polly at the end of February.

We have a panel of elected executive members, Tony Watts (secretary), Joyce Pullen (membership), Carolyn Leonard and myself charged with selecting a new development officer and then a new administrative assistant from the very healthy list of applicants.

Although all the Forum’s officers and executive members are volunteers, giving heavily of their time and energy, we do all rely heavily on the part-time staff to maintain the Forum as a viable and efficient organisation. Without them we could not function.

It really is a team effort involving our part-time staff and all the many volunteers that assist in so many different ways. We have virtually doubled our membership in the last three years since Polly succeeded Olivia, our first development officer, who never had the luxury of working in a Forum office.

In that time our affiliates have grown from 47 to 72. We have continued with the Falls Awareness and Fitness Days and Polly has put the Forum on the map by taking our banner to the Edmonton Carnival. I would particularly single out her work in linking the Forum to those elderly, frail and lonely people whom we’ve brought to Forum events

Thanks to Polly and Mina we are now a more professional organisation with monitoring, feedback and evaluation procedures from events and social activities to satisfy our donors. We now have many good people who can help deliver the work of the Forum and we thank them for helping to lay the solid foundation for the Forum’s continuing success in the future.

John Ball
Chair

News from the Met

Dial 101 if it's not an emergency - and remember - The Doorstep Code

Latest figures reveal that less than a quarter of 999 calls require an emergency response, so the Metropolitan Police Service has launched a new contact number for the public.

The new number is 101 is part of a national programme to improve access which will give the public one easy way to get in touch with the police for calls that do not require an urgent response. For example, the public should call 101 to report a crime that has already happened, seek crime prevention advice or make the Met. aware of local policing issues.

It has been introduced to improve access to the police, ease pressure on 999 and to help tackle crime and disorder. In London the new number is just one of the ways the Met. is modernising and improving its services while making them more accessible to the public.

As well as calling the police on 101 or 999, the public can use an online service to get information or report crime; join virtual neighbourhood ward panels to oversee and influence local policing; visit a police station or front counter round-the-clock, seven days a week; or approach an officer in the street.

As with 999, calls to 101 in London will be handled 24 hours a day, seven days a week by specially trained officers and staff at the MPS's Central Communications Command who will help deal with enquiries.

For people who speak little or no English they can also dial 101 where their call will be connected to an interpreter. Callers who are deaf, or have a hearing or speech impairment can use a textphone to call: 18001 101; or in an emergency it's 18000.

The aims of introducing 101 are to:

- Help communities keep their neighbourhoods safe by giving them one easy way to contact their local police and to report non-emergency crime and disorder,
- Make the police more accessible to their communities, whilst reducing pressure on the 999 system and helping the police to put their resources where they are needed most.
- Help the police to cut crime by making it easier for the public to pass on information about crimes in their neighbourhoods and allowing the police to take swift action.

Lock - keep your doors and windows locked, even when you're at home.

Stop - are you expecting anyone, do they have an appointment? Make sure the back door is locked - some thieves work in pairs with the other one sneaking in the back door while you're at the front door.

Chain - put the door bar or chain on before you open the door.

Check - check the identity of any caller carefully. Ask for an ID card. Close the door and check using a phone number from the phone book or a relevant bill, not the one on the card. to check your caller is genuine.

If in doubt, keep them out, particularly if you're on your own.

Ask them to make an appointment or come back later when someone else is around. Genuine callers won't mind. If you are suspicious, report the incident to the police. You may help prevent them from burgling someone else. Total Policing is the Met's commitment to be on the streets and in our communities to catch offenders, prevent crime and support victims.

They are here for London, working with us to make our capital safer.

Freedom Pass bill rises to £10.6million

Bus and tube fare increases of up to 6% imposed by Transport for London (TfL) earlier this year will push up the annual cost of the Freedom Pass to Enfield Council by £800,000 to a new peak of £10.6 million in the financial year 2012 / 13.

And further rises due to increasing numbers of both Freedom Pass holders and the journeys they make will mean that council tax payers in the borough will have to find a further estimated £600,000 by the financial year 2014 / 15.

The Forum has been assured that both the Community Toilet Scheme, through which the council pays some 30 local businesses to open their toilets to members of the public without having to make a purchase, and the annual cost of repairing pavement defects, are safe for the coming year.

And although for the third successive year there'll be no increases in council tax this year, the government grant will only equal the expected income from a 2.5% tax increase when inflation is running at roughly 5%.

However, the London Mayor's decision to reduce the GLA charge to council taxpayers by £3.10 a year will reduce a Band D in Enfield from £1410.16 to £1407.06 a reduction of 0.2% on the total amount payable.

Having already made or planned savings of some £48 million up to 2013, the council still needs to find another £32 million over the next two years to balance the books.

So it all points to tougher times ahead with council tax rises in 2013 / 4 and 2014 / 15 when all councils will take over the administration and cost of the council tax benefit scheme currently met by government – with councils bearing a 10% cut estimated to equal some £3.5 million.

Council leader Doug Taylor addressing the Forum's January budget consultation meeting said that although pensioners would be protected from this scheme, he feared it would have a detrimental effect on vulnerable residents.

Although Enfield had been assessed by government as needing £130 million in grant aid, this was being cut by £8million under a "damping" scheme in which that money is given unfairly to fund other councils – and Enfield is the hardest hit of all London councils..

How the council can deliver the same level of services to residents with less income will mean people will have to determine the priorities for future spending. It would help if the government gave us what they say we need instead of maintaining this pernicious system of "damping," said Cllr. Taylor.

Forum members urged Cllr Taylor to set out clearly the alternatives for future spending cuts so that choices can be discussed and decided with maximum consultation.

Top tips for the top property price

"It is natural to want to get the best price for your home," says Elaine Stennett, solicitor and head of Stennett Properties, the estate agency arm of Stennett & Stennett Solicitors. In the present market it is more important than ever to do whatever is necessary to make your property attractive. Here are some tips to give potential buyers the best possible impression.

Tidy the front garden.

They say the first impression is the most lasting so impress your buyer at the outset with a tidy garden. Trim the hedges and mow the lawn. Clear the area of weeds. If you live in a flat and share a communal area pick up any post by the entrance and politely ask neighbours to remove prams and bicycles blocking the hallway.

Repaint the front door.

Staying with the first impression theme, consider carrying out the relatively inexpensive task of repainting the front door.

De-clutter the rooms.

You want to make the home appear spacious to the potential buyer. This can be achieved by removing furniture. Use the opportunity to get rid of items hidden away in cupboards.

Avoid dramatic colour schemes.

Not everyone will appreciate your taste of wallpaper! Walls painted with neutral colours gives a fresh look that will appeal to others.

Carry out repairs.

Use this moment to do the small repairs that you have been putting off. Repair the dripping tap in the kitchen and replace the cracked floor tile. Think carefully before carrying out more expensive work. Buyers may not be as impressed as you are by your side extension. First work out by how much the proposed work will enhance the value of your home.

Make the bathroom and kitchen bright!

The bathroom and the kitchen are the two most important rooms when selling a property and so make sure they are clean. How would you feel if you inspected a dirty oven? Clear cluttered work-tops and give it a good shine.

Elaine took on a sale recently after the seller was disappointed he had not received offers to buy his house for several months. The seller received three offers for his house soon after taking her advice on how to present the property for sale.

Stennett & Stennett Solicitors and Stennett Properties offer a complete professional service at a competitive rate to sell your home. **Why not give Elaine Stennett a call on 020 8920 3191 or visit her at 4 Winchmore Hill Road Southgate London N14 6PT for a free consultation?**

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FORUM Meetings

DUGDALE CENTRE, Thomas Hardy House, 39 London Road.(by LIDL)

Tuesday 27 March- 10.30am coffee and registration 11am start

Special Meeting to discuss warm homes and healthy lifestyles. Get an update on the latest thinking on keeping energy costs down and making the most of healthy opportunities in Enfield. See supplement page S3 for details and to book a place.

PLEASE NOTE This meeting REPLACES the normal meeting at the Civic Centre for the 27 March.

CIVIC CENTRE, Silver Street, Enfield Town

Tuesday 28 April - 10am for 10.30 start

Bill Mackay, a member of the Forum executive and ex prison governor will talk about *the trials and tribulations of running a prison.*

MILLFIELD HOUSE MEETINGS

Thursday 15 March 10am for 10.30 start

Millfield House, Silver Street, Edmonton

Paulette Yusuf talks about *"Enfield Health Trainers and what help is available if you want to improve your health".*

Thursday 12 April 10am for 10.30 start

Millfield House, Silver Street, Edmonton

Natalie Gordon, talks about *"The North London Hospice and its new project in Barrowell Green and the services it provides to Enfield residents.*

SKINNERS COURT MEETINGS

Tuesday 20 March 10am for 10.30 start

Skinnners Court, 1 Pellipar Close, Fox Lane

Margit Physant from AgeUK will talk about **'Dignity in care - time for action'.**

Tuesday 17 April 10am for 10.30 start

Dan Devitt from the Royal Free Hospital NHS Trust

will be talking about the **North Central London Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm (AAA) screening programme - which seeks to identify and through screening and early action reduce the mortality levels of men affected by AAA.**(See page 7)

Poets' Corner

The New Year got off to an excellent start, the theme for the January meeting being **"Brief Encounters"** which covered many situations, some sad, some humorous. This was followed in February on the theme of **"Inspiration"** (not **"Aspirations"** as shown in the Jan/Feb Newsletter). On March 16 David Blake will lead on **"Poetry for Children"** but, as yet, no theme has been chosen for the meeting on April 19. A warm welcome awaits anyone who cares to join us at our meetings held in the Community Room at Enfield Town Library between 10.30am and 12 noon.

David Oliver

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Ask what you can do for your Forum

Back in January 1961, JFK in that famous speech: "ask not what your country can do for you – ask what you can do for your country," posed a question that I want to paraphrase and ask what is it you can do for the Forum.

Firstly, if you are a member who needs to renew that would be a step in the right direction. Our membership year ends on the 31 March and for the time being the fee remains at £7 individual, £10.50 couples and £17.50 for affiliates. If the label on the envelope containing this newsletter carries the note "Due 31 March 2012" then please renew as soon as possible to cut down our administration burden. No note means your subscription is not due for at least another year.

Now comes the second question and applies to every reader. We have a database of some 150 members who have offered help at some stage in the past. However, we have little or no idea of your skills, talents, availability etc. Also, we have not had a volunteer working on the database gaining this necessary information for us. We do now have such a volunteer, but would still love to have you cut down the workload by making a phone call to the office to update us on how you can help.

I do not just mean the 150 mentioned above. I reckon we can make use of most offers of help in such areas as events, stuffing newsletters, assisting in their bulk delivery to our affiliates, joining a committee (executive or social), assisting our office staff, newsletter production, arranging meetings, booking speakers, serving on external bodies, assisting myself at renewal time, assisting the secretary or our campaigns, and more.

This Forum continues to grow and now has a membership of over 4,000 but for you to enjoy the benefits of our meetings, leisure centre activities, social calendar we must have some new blood – that is the simple nuts and bolts of the Forum. See the back page of this newsletter re the forthcoming AGM.

We are coming up to the end of yet another membership year and I would like to thank all the office and Dugdale Centre volunteers, all the "stuffers," events volunteers, and anyone unintentionally forgotten. My thanks too to Polly Lawman who has unfortunately decided to leave us, for supporting me and the Forum.

Lastly, in welcoming our latest affiliate, Enfield Island Village Trust, they've invited us to the first of their Over 50s Club gatherings at the Enfield Island Village Community Hall, 42 Island Centre Way, EN3 6GS on Monday 5 March from 10.30 to 12.

Martine Eni, the community development co-ordinator is, with the help of the council's residents priority fund, planning to set up 12 different clubs in Enfield Island Village. It's a big, bold venture and we wish Martine and her team well in their endeavours which like the Forum, aims to improve the quality of life of our people.

Joyce Pullen

Membership Secretary

John's Jottings



Bad start to the year

It seems like only yesterday we were bidding each other "Happy New Year". Though well intentioned, the wishes do not seem to have got 2012 off to a good start. Bad news has emerged for older people almost across the board. Decisions on the future of long term care seem to be postponed, perhaps until the next Parliament. The scandals over equity release, supposedly buried some years ago, have been re-exposed by "Which?" Human rights are under attack because the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) in Strasbourg banned the deportation of Abu Qatada, the firebrand Islamic preacher

The only good news is that the rise in prices seems to be moderating, measured inflation is currently 4.8% per annum down from 5.2% a month earlier. Better than an increase, but small comfort to people with savings who will find it near impossible to earn 3% interest after tax.

Long term care

The Dilnot report into long term care has been reported on at length in this newsletter but a brief reminder of the proposals is that individuals who need long term care should pay only up to a cap of £35,000. After spending this the Government would pick up most of the rest of the tab. This would mean family houses would not usually have to be sold to pay for long term care. Dilnot also put forward important suggestions for ending the post code lottery over levels of local authority service by proposing national standards for both eligibility testing and levels of provision.

The cost of these proposals is said to be £1.7bn. for the cap and around £1bn. for raising all local authorities provision to good standards. Since there is estimated to be a £1.2bn. shortfall in existing provision the total package will cost around £4bn. p.a. serious money in a recession.

The debate has concentrated on the level of the cap: £60,000 has been suggested as a money saving alternative, as has putting off a decision. This concentration on an arbitrary cap is very unfortunate because neither politics nor economics point to a clear cut answer.

Some people will argue that the state should pay for all care, others will ask why people who can afford to pay for themselves should be subsidised by taxpayers who will in some cases be poorer than the beneficiary of the state largesse. It is nearly 500 years since central government first mandated parish councils, the local authorities in the 16th century, to care for the deserving poor.

We have been arguing ever since about who is "deserving" and what is the best way of supporting them. While the interminable debate drags on much needed introduction of national standards is quietly forgotten. A great shame.

John Ball, Chair

Teenagers as we all know have their own codes for text messages. So here's some for seniors to learn.

- * ATD - At the Doctor's
- * BTW - Bring the Wheelchair
- * BYOT - Bring Your Own Teeth
- * FWIW - Forgot Where I Was
- * GGPBL - Gotta Go, Pacemaker Battery Low
- * GHA - Got Heartburn Again
- * HGBM Had Good Bowel Movement
- * IMHAO - Is My Hearing-Aid On?
- * TTYL - Talk to You Louder
- * WAITT - Who Am I Talking To?
- * WTP - Where's the Prunes

Deep - Indian 50 plus Association

Two seminars on staying warm each with a vegetarian lunch and free raffle

Wednesday 14th March 2012
and Saturday 24th March 2012

12.30 pm to 1.30 pm at

Trinity at Bowes Methodist Church
Palmerston Road

Tickets £1 for each day to reserve a place
Call H K Raval 020 8881 9508

Yet another new primary care strategy

The joint boards of the NHS primary care trusts, which make up the NHS North Central London cluster - Barnet, Camden, Enfield, Haringey, and Islington – have approved a new primary care strategy to run from 2012 to 2016.

It claims it will transform primary care to ensure that patients in our area will have access to consistent high quality, accessible and responsive health services.

The strategy will be supported by detailed plans for each of the five boroughs, and address some of the biggest health challenges facing our local population including:

- * Smoking - responsible for 20% of deaths in the area
- * Over 200,000 adults in the area are estimated to be obese
- * Enfield has a gap of 11.5 years in life expectancy for women which is widening
- * Many children in North Central London are growing up in poverty

Dr Douglas Russell, medical director (primary care) for NHS North Central London, said: "Currently, the quality and accessibility of primary care is variable across the five boroughs. There are some excellent services but there are also some that are simply not up to standard.

"Primary care has a pivotal role to play in keeping people healthy and providing high-quality services close to people's homes - thereby reducing the need for people to use A&E and hospital services.

"Radical change is needed if we are to improve the quality of care. It should be easy for patients to choose to be registered at a locally accessible GP practice. They should be treated in high quality surroundings and provided with information that explains how to get appropriate treatment at any time of the day or night - whether this is at home, in a surgery or simply medicine from a pharmacy.

"Whilst all GP practices need to be able to offer a range of tests and treatments, we are encouraging GPs to work together to provide a comprehensive service by developing Integrated Care Networks (ICNs). This will mean that patients never have to go more than a short distance to get the full range of primary care, from speech and language therapy to podiatry, mental health services or x-rays and specialist diabetes care.

"Responsive, comprehensive and high quality primary care is the key to eliminating these health inequalities. Now the new primary care strategy has been approved, each borough will draw up detailed investment plans for local developments

to transform primary care in North Central London and I am encouraging people to get involved."

Dr Nick Losseff, medical director for secondary care for NHS North Central London said: "The strategy proposes much closer working between GPs but also between other clinicians such as practice and specialist nurses, therapists and other health professionals. This will provide a specialist network of care for each and every patient.

"Patients will usually be seen locally in their community and not in a hospital - although strong links will be developed with hospitals so patients are treated quickly and appropriately when necessary.

"The primary care strategy will help hospitals to focus on patients who need specialist care and support. As a hospital consultant, I am looking forward to engaging with my colleagues to find out how we can support our local primary care clinicians to transform and improve community care services."

The Forum says this is yet another primary care strategy promising much but with little detail about the level of "significant savings" to be achieved and how much will be invested to bring those of sub-standard GP practices up to date

We are again promised that the new strategy and investment will enable the development of local hospitals to provide higher quality specialist services in buildings fit for the 21st century – but again there's no detail.

We note too that the process of developing the strategy has included borough-based stakeholder workshops and direct engagement of GP and other independent contractor representatives – but no patient involvement. Hence our first response is that we have heard all this so many times before.

To rub salt into the wound the joint NHS primary care trusts say that implementing the strategy will require the support of all independent contractors, nurses, therapists, hospital doctors and all other clinicians and managers involved in the delivery of primary and community care – thus totally ignoring the views of the main users of primary care.

There's an old saying that fine words butter no parsnips or action speaks louder than words.

To view the strategy or comment on it, go to www.ncl.nhs.uk or email us at communications@nclondon.nhs.uk.

Be clear on cancer campaign opens

Early bowel cancer diagnosis could save up to 200 lives in London

In London 1,400 people die every year from bowel cancer – the second biggest cancer killer. Data from Cancer Research UK shows that around 93% of people who are diagnosed with the first stage of the disease are still alive after five years, whereas just 6% of patients diagnosed with the later or most advanced stages of bowel cancer are still alive after this time.

More than 3,300 people in London are diagnosed with bowel cancer every year. It is estimated early diagnosis could save up to 200 lives every year. Symptoms include passing blood and bad diarrhoea or notice blood in their poo or looser poo in the last three weeks should get a check with their GP

The "Be Clear on Cancer" campaign, which runs until March 31 is being led by the Department of Health. It aims to tell people what symptoms to look for and to encourage people to go to their GP early if they have symptoms.

In a lot of cases patients who go to their GP will not have bowel cancer and it is estimated that around one in 20 who go to their GP with symptoms will have the disease. But it is important to make sure, because the earlier the cancer is treated the better, and early diagnosis saves lives.

If doctors suspect patients have cancer they will send them for tests which can help show if there is a cancer. This may be a colonoscopy where a tiny fibre optic camera is used to examine the large bowel and

parts of the small bowel – or a flexible sigmoidoscopy which examines the last part of the colon.

Dr Simon Tanner, director of public health at NHS London, said: ***"Bringing up the subject is never an easy thing, but we hope this campaign will give people more confidence to speak to their GP. In London we have done a lot of preparatory work to ensure our services across the capital are ready to meet the challenge to manage the extra testing that we anticipate will happen as a result of the campaign".***

GPs and hospitals are geared up to meet this challenge to continue to provide the best possible care to Londoners. GP surgeries have received Bowel Cancer UK information packs to give them information about diagnosis and sending patients for tests.

Survival from bowel cancer is worse in the UK and in London than in Europe and it is estimated there are around 1,700 avoidable deaths from bowel cancer in the UK.

Research shows that the reason for this is because people in England are more likely to be diagnosed later. Only a small proportion of people in London are aware of the symptoms of bowel cancer and many wait too long to see their GP. The purpose of Be Clear on Cancer is to raise awareness of these symptoms and encourage people to go to their GP early if they have concerns.

Lansley's NHS upheaval under fire

While Prime Minister Cameron and Health Secretary Andrew Lansley defiantly press ahead with the Health and Social Care Bill, opposition within the medical profession continues to grow leaving patients more bewitched, bothered and bewildered than ever.

The British Medical Association, the Royal College of Nursing, the Chartered Institute of Physiotherapists, the Royal College of Psychiatrists, the Royal College of Radiologists, the Patients Association, the Faculty of Public Health and the Royal College of Midwives have already moved to a position of outright opposition to the Bill and called for it to be withdrawn.

The Royal College of General Practitioners (RCGP) – whose members bear the brunt of the changes - has also said the Bill should be completely withdrawn, with a poll of its members finding more than 90% supported the College in proceeding with calls for the Bill to be scrapped.

In a letter to David Cameron, the RCGP said the Bill would cause **"irreparable damage to patient care."** Dr Clare Gerada, the RCGP chair said: **"Competition and the opening up of our health service to any qualified provider, will lead not only to fragmentation of care, but also potentially to a two-tier system with access to care defined by a patient's ability to pay."**

"As the organisation representing the views of over 44,000 GPs we cannot support a Bill that will damage the care and services that GPs deliver to patients and ultimately bring about the demise of a unified national health service."

The editors of the British Medical Journal, Health Service Journal and Nursing Times in an unprecedented combined statement said: The Department of Health has recently admitted that it still has **'no clarity'** over which new organisation will take on the functions performed by 11,000 PCT staff, while the numbers and size of emerging Clinical Commissioning Groups is a matter of increasing tension between GPs who want to maintain local control and the DoH which is concerned with financial stability."

The original Lansley Bill has attracted more than 1,000 amendments since it was first tabled in July 2010, ending up as a bigger piece of legislation than the original act of setting up the NHS in 1948. It is the biggest reorganisation in NHS history from a government that before the 2010 general election promised no more top down reorganisations

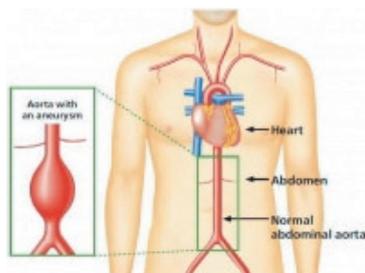
Against this background we are left completely in the dark and can only watch and wait to see how the NHS performs locally.

Be vigilant !

Time to check your Aorta

There's a new AAA screening programme available to Forum members and it's not about checking your torch or radio battery. AAA in this case stands for **Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm**. And the NHS has launched a "better safe than sorry" screening programme of the aorta at the Royal Free Hospital.

In some people, as they get older, the wall of the aorta weakens. The aorta is the main blood vessel supplying blood to your body running down from your heart through your chest and abdomen. It can start to expand and form what is called an abdominal aortic aneurysm or "AAA". The condition is most common in men aged 65 and above.



This diagram shows a normal aorta on the right and one with an aneurysm on the left.

Large aneurysms are rare but can be very serious. As the wall of the aorta stretches it becomes weaker and could give way. If this happens, the person usually dies. AAA screening exists because most **large AAAs can be treated through surgery if they are detected early** and your chances of a good outcome and long term health increases.

An aorta which is only slightly larger than normal is **not** dangerous, but it's still important to know about it so that the aneurysm can be monitored to see if it grows.

Chances of having AAA can also increase if:

- You smoke
- You have high blood pressure
- Your brother, sister or parent has, or has had AAA

Screening is offered in Enfield to men only at present as they are approximately six times more likely to have AAA than women.

To make a screening appointment you will need your NHS number and the name/ address of your GP and then contact:

The Royal Free Hampstead NHS Trust AAA Screening
020 7794 0500 ext 38175 or email: rf.nclaaascreening@nhs.net

Random round-up

Conflict of interest?

This was the headline in the Times on January 25 over a graph showing that executive pay in the top 100 companies had risen by 49% in 2010. The average pay of top executives was £1million in 1998 and £4.2million in 2010. For the humble employee the average was £20,720 in 1998 and £25,900 in 2010. And they say we're all in this together!

Forget jogging

Ten minutes digging in the garden or mowing the lawn can be just as healthy as longer exercise sessions of jogging, says Professor Fiona Bull of Loughborough University. Regular shorter bursts of activity can be just as good as occasional longer sessions and even simply standing can reduce levels of harmful cholesterol. The common belief that only vigorous activity would keep you fit was a hangover from the early days of jogging. Moderate, where the heart beats faster but you are not out of breath is just as good as an equivalent amount of vigorous exercise.

All change in London's policing structure

The Metropolitan Police Authority has been abolished and the Mayor of London is now responsible for policing. A new Mayor's Office for Policing & Crime will set priorities for the police. The role of scrutinising this new body and holding the Met to account rests with London Assembly's new Police and Crime Committee which will be chaired by Enfield's Assembly member **Joanne McCartney**.

The committee is gathering evidence from experts about how to tackle gangs. **"This is a crucial issue for the capital, and one that impacts throughout our communities. It was clear from our panel that long-term commitment to working together with police, borough councils, health services and the voluntary sector is vital to turning around this worrying trend"**, says Joanne.

Friday 9 March 2012 (Note new date). Brick Lane Music Hall - TICKETS STILL AVAILABLE

£36-50 for 3 course lunch St Patrick's Day Show by coach, Meet outside Lidl/Argos Enfield Town 12-15 for 12-30 departure return approx. 6pm Contact Roddy Beare 020 8292 4324

The following are the book club dates for the next two months.

Thursday 22 March The Help by Kathryn Stockett. Enfield Library 10am.

Wednesday 18 April The Ginger Tree by Oswald Wynde. Enfield library 10 am.

Wednesday 16th May Book club this months book is the 19th Wife by David Evershoff.

Friday 6 April to Monday 9th April. A 4 day 3 night Easter break in Holland in conjunction with Davian Coach Holidays. Floriade 2012 Holland will once again play host to the unmissable World Horticultural Expo staged once only every 10 years. Come and enjoy the exquisite display of flowers, plants and trees from all over the world. We stay at the family run hotel Grand Metropole in Valkenburg on the Dutch/German border. Cost £349 per person bed breakfast and evening meal. £50 single room supplement
Call Roy Barrows on 020 8360 8561 to reserve your place

Thursday 19 April 2012. Come on a wonderful guided tour of the magical Wrest Park House and Gardens, as seen on TV.

Price will be approx. £22.00. This includes coach from Enfield, entrance and a guided tour. We will meet at Enfield Town, Argos/Lidl, at 9.30.a.m. return about 6.30.p.m. For details contact Lorraine Murray on 020 8805 3506 or email lorraineofenfield@yahoo.co.uk

Tuesday 24 April 2012 Lunch at 12.30.p.m. and/or

Tuesday 8 May 2012 Dinner at 7.30.p.m.

New Turkish delight in N21 called Mozz (means honeybee) Join us for either a lunch or dinner or both, to support yet another delightful eatery in our borough. The meal will begin with hot and cold starters followed by a main course of your choice and either tea or coffee to finish. Cost £15 per person. To book a place, and select your main course, contact Olivia on 020 8447 8841 or email oliviaharrod@virginmedia.com

Monday 14 May 2012 - Falcons, planes and planting at Biggleswade:

Join us on this day trip to the Old Warden Park at Biggleswade, where you can enjoy guided tours of the Shuttleworth collection of vintage planes and machines, a guided tour of the Swiss Garden, lunch in the restaurant and then a falconry experience, looking at 200 birds of prey and enjoying a flying display to round off the day. For a booking form and further details, please contact Olivia on 0208 447 8841 or email oliviaharrod@virginmedia.com

Sunday 20 May 2012. 10 days sightseeing in beautiful Prague

is being organised by an international federation to which we are affiliated. Coach trips to Dresden, the Carlsbad spa and ancient Butna Hora along with entertainment on several evenings and a river cruise are included. Access to private rooms in the old town hall and Parliament buildings along with a civic reception are privileges not available to ordinary tourists. Full board and all entertainments are included in the price of 500 Euros, about £420. Cost of flight to Prague is not included. For further information please contact Jean Mittins, 020 8367 2102 Email: mercia1211@talktalk.net

Wednesday 6 June. Come on a visit to the British Postal Museum and Archive Store at Debden.

Leave Enfield Town Station mid morning. Highlights include a fleet of postal service vehicles illustrating the long history of moving the mail, and over 50 pillar boxes of different types, from one of the first boxes trialled in the UK to modern designs and prototypes. Visitors will enjoy two 30-minute curator-led tours, separated by a break and complimentary refreshments. This tour involves a lot of walking and standing and may not be suitable for some folk. Numbers are limited and so to book a place contact John Peach on 020 8360 2338. This is a freedom pass trip total cost is £3.00.

Saturday 15 September 2012 at 2.30pm. Following the phenomenal success of "South Pacific" last year, the Barbican is presenting Opera North's exciting production of that evergreen favourite **Rogers and Hammerstein's "Carousel"**. There are 30 Gallery tickets available at £24 (includes an admin. charge). For more information and to book contact Irene by email at poosticks@blueyonder.co.uk. Or phone 020 8363 8175.

Sunday October 14 2012. Join us on the adventure of a lifetime to **Marrakech and the Atlas Mountains with Travelsphere**. Entice your senses in the fascinating fabled city of Marrakech which enjoys a spectacular setting between the Sahara Desert and the towering peaks of the Atlas Mountains. Holiday dates are October 14th 2012 for a 6 day trip, which includes wonderful excursions, half board and the usual standard of a Travel sphere holiday. For further information and a booking form please contact Olivia at oliviaharrod@virginmedia.com or telephone 020 8447 8841.

NEWS FLASH NEWS FLASH

Hard hat tours of Forty Hall. These tours are on a Tuesday afternoon and they go round the parts of Forty Hall to see the work that has been done and the work still in progress. They last about 45 minutes and cost £3.00. For more details contact Roddy Beare on 020 8292 4324.



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Present this advert to receive **£50 off our services**. Offer is limited to one voucher per matter and available to **Enfield Over 50s Forum members only**.

On the bright side Hospital bus battles rattle on

Don't laugh.....it is all true...

Top 20 perks on reaching 50, or being over 60 and heading towards 70 or more!

1. Kidnappers are not very interested in you.
2. In a hostage situation you are likely to be released first.
3. No one expects you to run anywhere.
4. People call at 9 pm and ask: did I wake you?
5. People no longer view you as a hypochondriac.
6. There is nothing left to learn the hard way.
7. Things you buy now won't wear out,
8. You can even eat supper at 4 pm.
9. You can live without sex but not your glasses.
10. You get into heated arguments about pension plans.
11. You no longer think of speed limits as a challenge.
12. You quit trying to hold your stomach in no matter who walks into the room.
13. You sing along with elevator music.
14. Your eyes won't get much worse.
15. If you invested in health it is finally beginning to pay off.
16. Your joints are more accurate meteorologists than the national weather forecast.
17. Your secrets are safe with your friends because they can't remember them either.
18. Your supply of brain cells is finally down to manageable size.
19. You can't remember who sent you this list.
20. Never, ever, take a sleeping pill and a laxative on the same night.

Due to reader demand here are some more Tommy Cooper one liners *Yes, he was brilliant!!*

1. Two blondes walk into a buildingyou'd think at least one of them would have seen it.
2. Phone answering machine message - '...If you want to buy marijuana, press the hash key..'
3. A guy walks into the psychiatrist wearing only Clingfilm for shorts. The shrink says, 'Well, I can clearly see you're nuts.'
4. I went to buy some camouflage trousers the other day - but I couldn't find any.
5. My friend drowned in a bowl of muesli. A strong currant pulled him in.
6. A man came round in hospital after a serious accident. He shouted, 'Doctor, doctor, I can't feel my legs!' The doctor replied, 'I know you can't, I've cut your arms off'.
7. I went to a seafood disco last week, and pulled a muscle.

Next SSO concert

**Bourne Methodist Church,
The Bourne, Southgate N14 6RS**
on **Saturday 21 April at 7.30pm.**

Programme :

Dvorak: 'Legends' several short pieces for orchestra by the composer who wrote the famous 'Slavonic Dances'

Chausson: 'Poeme' for violin and orchestra with **Verity Thirkettle**, a very gifted young violinist.

Schumann: Symphony No 1 'Spring' just the thing for this time of year and with lots of great tunes.

Tickets for Forum members £8 (£11 full price on the night) must be pre-purchased before the concert. Call Monty Meth 020 8882 1303

Enfield's London Assembly member **Joanne McCartney** has been fighting alongside the Forum to get that elusive extension of route 307 into Barnet Hospital and to get route 318 into North Middlesex Hospital extended for people in the west side of the borough.

We know you'll believe it when you see it but Joanne has now been told by Peter Fletcher, information co-ordinator at Transport for London (TfL), having amended design plans for a new bus stand to satisfy Barnet Council, "**we expect to be in a position to introduce the service to the hospital in May.**" But ominously Mr Fletcher adds: "**assuming no unforeseen problems arise**".

We were told by NHS Enfield that this service would be up and running years ago, but people like partially sighted Mrs Foster have been in touch with the Forum to support the Forum's long-running campaign for the 307 route to go right into the hospital and save the walk uphill from Wellhouse Road. Mrs Foster is 80 years old and her neighbours are 89 and 87 and they tell us they find the walk very difficult and it takes them a lot of time and energy to get to the hospital.

But the drive to get the 318 extended northwards along Silver Street, (Edmonton) and via Hedge Lane, Firs Lane, Barrowell Green, Green Lanes, Green Dragon Lane to Highlands Village serving and providing access to and from numerous schools and shopping areas in the west side of the Borough **has again stalled.**

Forum vice-chair Peter Smith and president Monty Meth together with Joanne McCartney and Cllr Derek Levy had a good hour long session with Leon Daniels, managing director TfL surface transport, and Clare Kavanagh, TfL performance director.

They gave us the same old story as last year. TfL have no more money for what they conceive to be a loss-making service. They will get £389 million subsidy from the government in the next financial year, which is less than last year, and they have to plan for a £18million reduction in subsidy next year.

All the talk was about efficiencies and economies in this difficult economic climate. TfL said they had seen a figure of 130 patients per day switching hospitals as a result of the Chase Farm facility changes.

It was pretty obvious we had reached a dead end when Mr Daniels said the number of passengers they envisaged using the 318 would not even pay the driver's wages. To try and break the deadlock we suggested that TfL should take the lead in approaching Andrew Lansley as Health Secretary and Dame Ruth Carnal, NHS London CEO, for a grant to test the validity of TfL's claim that the extended service would lose them money.

After all, the health bosses have often stated there'll be no changes in NHS hospital services until better transport and primary care services were in place. So if they want to go ahead with their reconfiguration plans they must help TfL find the money to extend the 318 service. **Let NHS London and Health Secretary Andrew Lansley put their money where their mouths are.**

Free swims from Fusion

**The Arnos Pool Free Swim details are as follows:
Every -Tuesday 11.30am - 12.30pm
(FREE SWIM for Over 50s Forum members & over 60s with existing FREE swim card)**

Thursday 2.30pm - 3.30pm (FREE SWIM for Over 50s Forum members & over 60s with existing FREE swim card)

Human rights

Currently we are hearing much about Human Rights. The Equality and Human Rights Commission report on elderly care suggested part of the problem was due to the fact that the Human Rights Act does not require Local Authorities to write human rights requirements into the contracts of private sector care providers.

To my mind it beggars belief that we need specific reference to human rights to stop carers abusing and even robbing their vulnerable charges. However, such is the faith in Human Rights legislation that this issue of wording of contracts is one AGE Concern, now merged into AgeUK, has been campaigning on for years.

Whilst some people clamour for more Human Rights it often appears that others have too many. We can all recall the spectacle of protesting prisoners on a roof top asserting it was their human right to have fresh take away food delivered to them. Less visibly spectacular but more worrying was the announcement by the President of Senegal, a couple of years ago, that his citizens had the Human Right to settle in Spain if they wanted to.

The Prime Minister is currently trying to get agreement to limit the rights of illegal immigrants from the Council Of Europe's Human Rights Convention. What neither those clamouring for more Human Rights nor those arguing for curtailment seem to realise is that things have changed dramatically since 1950 when the Convention was signed.

In particular, when Gordon Brown sneaked off in the night to sign the Lisbon Treaty he signed us up to the EU's Fundamental charter of Human Rights which is an integral part of the Treaty. The fact that it is part of the Treaty means that 27 countries have to ratify any changes.

Now the relevance of this is that the EU's fundamental Charter appears to be a platinum plated version of the 1950 Convention with crystal bells attached. Everything in the Convention is restated with more force in the Charter and there is no definition of who is covered so it will be down to the EU Court to decide the rights of illegal immigrants, prisoners and other groups.

There is no doubt that the frail elderly are well protected by the Charter, the problem here is enforcement of rights. Some interesting court cases will appear in the next few years to test who should enforce these rights.

So why is the PM trying to get changes to a Convention which is superseded? The Foreign Office are aware of the EU Charter since they will have helped draft it. The Home office too will have been consulted. One would hope that No 10 knew about it since Gordon Brown signed us up but David Cameron carries on seemingly oblivious to the fact that he is largely wasting his time.

Has no-one told him that we are committed to the Charter? Does he know about it but has chosen to ignore it so he can be seen to be active? One thing that is certain is when the first cases start going to the EU Court of Justice many people will feign surprise, but hopefully, not the readers of this Newsletter.

John Ball

Miners' appeal thanks Forum

"Thank you for your donation of £151 to the Swansea Valley Miners' Appeal Fund in respect of the four miners who so tragically lost their lives. Your generosity is greatly appreciated by the families who have been traumatised by events and it reflects the great and moving spirit of caring and support which has followed on from the tragedy.

The funds will be administered by three experienced and respected Trustees appointed by the South Wales Union of Mineworkers, the Most Reverend Barry Morgan, Archbishop of Wales,

Spitting ban passes first hurdle

With about 1,000 more than the 2,750 signatures required to trigger an Enfield Council debate on our petition to ban spitting in public places, the authority's Overview and Scrutiny Committee (O&SC) has agreed to refer the matter to a full council meeting – the next stage in the process.

This will take place on Wednesday 28 March when the Forum will urge the council to approach the Department of Communities and local Government and the Ministry of Justice for permission to introduce the by-law to ban spitting, making Enfield the first borough in the country to do so. Support from Forum members attending will be appreciated.

The petition, led by the Forum, was presented to the O&SC by president Monty Meth and secretary Tony Watts who told the committee that signatures had come from all sections of the community and had attracted widespread support from many organisations and individuals.

Speaking at the meeting held in the council chamber, Monty Meth said: ***"Everyone agrees that spitting is a disgusting, unhealthy habit and the sooner new regulations are brought in the better. It is significant that only four people disagreed with the petition as posted on the council's website.***

"Banning spitting will make our streets cleaner. Outlawing spitting will bring our diverse communities closer together. Imposing a financial penalty will help everyone become better citizens and help educate people and make sure they appreciate that spitting is not acceptable and not a part of this nation's culture".

Enfield Council's Cabinet Member for Environment, Cllr Chris Bond, said: ***"We are a step closer to banning spitting which is fantastic news. We've always said it was a dirty, anti-social habit that should be stamped out and the Over 50s Forum has done a fantastic job in generating a groundswell of public support for this proposal.***

"If things go to plan, we'll soon be able to ask the government to give us the power to ban spitting in our borough, we hope they take our request seriously. It's what our residents want and it's what we want."

The Health Protection Agency says that spitting is not hygienic and may carry a small risk of spreading infection. However, the coughing and chest clearing that may be associated with spitting is likely to be a more significant risk to the spread of infections. The HPA would encourage various steps that people can take to reduce the spread of infection.

Good basic respiratory and hand hygiene can help to reduce transmission of all viruses such as:

- * Covering your nose and mouth when coughing or sneezing, using a tissue when possible.
- * Disposing of dirty tissues promptly and carefully.
- * Washing hands frequently with soap and water to reduce the spread of the virus from your hands to face or to other people.
- * Cleaning hard surfaces (e.g. door handles) frequently using a normal cleaning product.

Wayne Thomas Secretary of the NUM South Wales and Tyrone O'Sullivan, the former leader of the Tower Colliery.

The four families have been contacted and we remain in close touch with them. They are deeply grateful for your contribution. My office has been overpowered by the support. Thank you again.

Best wishes

Peter Hain MP for Neath

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It is a very effective way of treating almost all your aches and pains, so if you have any questions about your problem, or to book an appointment phone 020 8373 0435

Conditions treated include:

Arthritic pain	Hip and knee pain	Disc prolapses
Leg pain	Foot problems	Frozen shoulder
Headaches	Muscular aches and pains	

For further information visit the clinic website at
www.north-london-osteopaths.co.uk

The Jewish Chronicle ran a best jokes competition which was won by Monty Meth's friend Ron Goldstein with this slice of rabbinical wisdom:

Three ministers of religion are in a train carriage on their way to an ecumenical conference. Inevitably the talk gets around to the thorny subject of **"when does life actually begin"**.

The Catholic priest starts the discussion by saying: **"In my humble opinion, life begins when the child is first conceived. There can be no other answer."**

The Protestant priest says: **"If you really want the truth, life begins when the midwife smacks the child on the bottom. It takes its first breath and then cries."**

And the rabbi says: **"With respect, gentlemen, you've both got it wrong. Life begins when your daughter leaves home and the dog dies!"**

The "Jewish Bra

A young Jewish man walks into the lingerie department of Macy's in New York. He tells the saleslady, **"I would like a Jewish bra for my wife size 34 b."**

With a quizzical look the saleslady asked, **"What kind of bra?"**

He repeated, **"A Jewish bra. She said to tell you that she wanted a Jewish bra, and that you would know what she wanted."**

"Ah, now I remember," said the saleslady. **"We don't get as many requests for them as we used to. Most of our customers lately want the Catholic bra, or the Salvation Army bra, or the Presbyterian bra."**

Confused, and a little flustered, the man asked **"So, what are the differences?"** The sales lady responded. **"It is all really quite simple. The Catholic bra supports the masses, the Salvation Army lifts up the fallen, and the Presbyterian bra keeps them staunch and upright."**

He mused on that information for a minute and said: **"Hmm. I know I'll regret asking, but what does the Jewish bra do?"**

"Ah, the Jewish bra," she replied, **"makes mountains out of mole-hills"**.

If I were a rich man!

O.M.G., I'm rich!

Silver in the Hair	Gold in the Teeth
Crystals in the Kidneys	Sugar in the Blood
Lead in the Ass	Iron in the Arteries
And an inexhaustible supply of Natural Gas.	
I never thought I'd accumulate such wealth.	

Reminder: Wills Week offer

Forum members will have their chance to make their will for £99 (a saving of £135 on the normal Stennett and Stennett fee) during the Forum's Wills Week. This offer will run between 19 -23 March 2012. The S&S voucher in the Newsletter cannot be used with this offer.

It is astonishing that seven out of every ten people still die without leaving a will, according to the probate office. This only means that your personal wishes cannot be taken into account and that your assets will be distributed according to the laws of intestacy.

And again for two weeks following the Wills Week and beginning 26 March until 5 April 2012 Stennett & Stennett will be offering Forum members the chance to prepare the Lasting Power of Attorney (LPA) documents featured on page 6 of the January/February newsletter.

A lasting power of attorney for health and welfare allows a family member to have a say about your medical treatment, which is useful if or when you are too ill to express yourself clearly. A lasting power of attorney will help to manage your property and financial affairs. It assists with managing bank accounts and investments and is very useful when important steps are needed to plan for inheritance tax or care fees.

A lasting power of attorney can be used at any time when and if you are ever unable to make your own decisions – and it can only be arranged when you have the mental capacity to do it.

Stennett and Stennett usually charge for one LPA £495 plus VAT at 20% plus the Court fee, totalling £724.00. They are offering Forum members the chance to prepare an LPA for £350 plus VAT and Court fee - a total charge of £550 and saving £174.00.

To book a free initial appointment or ask any questions call Michael Stennett or Debbie Stimson on 020 8920 3190

Roy Barrows

We are pleased to report that our executive committee vice-chair and key social committee member, Roy Barrows, is making a slow but good recovery from a fractured skull. He passed out in central London and thanks to para-medics and the London Ambulance Service he was speedily taken to University College London Hospital.

Roy has been a stalwart organiser of our Freedom Pass and other trips including one to the Imperial War Museum at Duxford Airfield on Remembrance Sunday.

Stan Sparrey, one of the participants, wrote to us saying: **"I would like to thank Roy Barrows for a really wonderful day at the above event which gave us the opportunity to view inside the many types of aircraft on display. It really was a new experience for many of us from the Forum - about 25 members made the trip with our two excellent coach drivers getting us safely there and back. So thanks again Roy, a first class event you arranged for us."**

We all look forward to welcoming Roy back to his renowned jovial self.

**Raffle Prizes wanted:
Our Forum meeting raffles are a small but steady source of income. So please offer us your unwanted gift. Call 020 8807 2076.**

Please note: if you have to cancel your place on a Forum social activity/trip, we will make every attempt to fill your place. If this is not possible you may lose your booking fee/deposit.
Disclaimer: The Enfield Over 50s Forum is not liable for any personal injury/accidents that may occur during any of its activities/events.

Forum Annual General Meeting

This year the **AGM** will take place on **28 May 2012** at the Civic Centre, Silver Street, when the Annual Report and accounts will be presented. There will also be a guest speaker.

Any members interested in standing for the Forum's Executive Committee and wanting to discuss the opportunities should contact the secretary via the Forum Office 020 8807 2076 or info@enfieldover50sforum.org.uk

To keep you warm

**Come to a soup & socks session
Enjoy a delicious mug of hot soup
and receive a free pair of socks**

Friday 9 March

**Community House, Fore Street,
Edmonton N9 0PZ
12 noon to 1.30pm**

Book your place with Julie Boyd 020 8379 5352

A winter warmer recipe Minestrone Soup

Serves 4

(Can be kept in the fridge after cooking for 5 days)

Ingredients

- | | |
|------------|------------------------------------|
| 1 | Bacon Hock (Optional) |
| 2tbsp | Vegetable or Olive Oil |
| 75g (3oz) | Chopped Onion |
| 75g (3oz) | Chopped Carrot |
| 75g (3oz) | Chopped Celery |
| 75g (3oz) | Chopped Leek |
| 2 | Cloves Chopped Garlic (Optional) |
| 2tbsp | Tomato Puree |
| 1.5ltr | Vegetable Stock Or The Bacon Stock |
| 200g (8oz) | Potatoes |
| 50g (2oz) | Green Beans |
| 50g (2oz) | Courgettes |
| 75g (3oz) | Broken Dried Spaghetti |
| | Chopped Bacon From The Hock |
| | Ground Black Pepper |

The day before making the soup, cover the bacon hock with 1.5 litres of water. Bring to the boil and simmer for approximately one and a half hours. Top up with water every 20 minutes. Allow the hock to cool in the liquid and then transfer to the fridge.

Method

1. Finely chop the onion, carrot, celery and leek. Heat the oil in a saucepan and add these ingredients. Cook these on a gentle heat for 5 minutes.
2. Add the chopped garlic, tomato puree, mix well and then cover with either the vegetable stock or the bacon stock.
3. Bring to the boil and then add the chopped potatoes. Simmer for 20 minutes and then add the chopped green beans, courgettes and broken spaghetti.
4. Cook for a further 7-8 minutes before adding the chopped bacon. Season with ground black pepper and serve with crusty bread and a little parmesan

Garage Door

The boss walked into the office one morning not knowing his zipper was down and his fly area wide open. His assistant walked up to him and said: **'This morning when you left your house, did you close your garage door?'** The boss told her he knew he'd closed the garage door, and walked into his office puzzled by the question.

As he finished his paperwork, he suddenly noticed his fly was open, and zipped it up. He then understood his assistant's question about his **'garage door.'** He headed out for a cup of coffee and paused by her desk to ask, **'When my garage door was open, did you see my Porsche parked in there?'**

She smiled and said, **'No, I didn't. All I saw was an old mini van with two flat tyres.'**

Subscription Renewals

If your address label on the envelope this newsletter arrived in had a line stating:

Due 31 March 2012

please renew your membership now.



Enfield Borough Over 50s Forum

Join the Over 50s Forum Now

(I/We/My Club) wish(es) to apply for membership of the Enfield Borough Over 50s Forum. Enclosed is a payment of (£7.00 individual membership; £10.50 for couples; £17.50 for Clubs). (Delete as appropriate). Cheques should be made payable to **Enfield Borough Over 50s Forum**. You can register for two years at twice the above rates as this cuts down the administration burden. Life membership is on offer at £100, £150 and £250 respectively for single, joint and club subscriptions.

Surname : _____ Title(Mr, Mrs, Ms): _____

First Name(s) : _____

Organisation* : _____

Address : _____

Post Code : _____ Age: _____

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* *Ignore if joining as an individual or a couple.*

As a registered charity the Forum can collect gift aid on donations and subscriptions made by you provided you pay income tax. If you agree to the Forum recovering gift aid tick this box: and sign the declaration below.

I want the Forum (a) to reclaim tax on all donations/subscriptions I have made to the Forum since February 2008 and on all future donations/subscriptions I make until I notify the Forum otherwise and (b) I pay sufficient income tax and/or capital gains tax equal to the amount to be reclaimed (currently 28p for every £1).

Name in CAPITALS

Signed:

Date:

Please return this application form to:
Joyce Pullen, Membership Secretary
Enfield Borough Over 50s Forum, Millfield House, Silver Street, N18 1PJ
Tel:020 8807 2076 (9.30am - 12.30pm Mon-Fri)
email: info@enfieldover50sforum.org.uk

Four pages of advice and information aimed at helping you to:

Keep warm and keep well

a 4-page pull out to read & keep

This supplement has been sponsored by the Department of Health's Warm Homes – Healthy People Project.

Introduction

Winter is far from over. Yes, we have been told that this has been the second mildest winter in some 350 years, producing a 4% drop in gas and electricity demand. We had the second mildest November in 100 years, a mild December and the first two weeks of January were two degrees above the average.

Flowers were in bloom long before their time. Then it all changed. Daytime temperatures in February were five degrees lower than the average for the month, traditionally the coldest of the year. Temperatures plunged at night, biting winds and freezing across the UK and Europe meant the elderly and vulnerable were at greater risk

Every winter there are more than 200 extra deaths every day over and above the average for this time of year among older people as a direct result of the cold weather.

Why do more older people die in winter in the UK than they do in the much colder climate experienced in the Scandinavian countries? Many people just do not realise how cold they are getting, particularly those vulnerable to heart attacks and strokes as low temperatures raises their blood pressure.

People who coped quite easily with very cold weather years ago just do not realise that their bodies are less able to cope with extremes of heat and cold. They are likely to be less mobile as they get older, so generating less body heat. The message we have to get across is simple to remember:

Cold is a killer and we all have to keep warm to keep well

So can we all do something for ourselves to cut the winter death toll? Yes, we can. And we hope this pull-out will help you to **keep warm and well in this and future winters.**

Warm homes healthy people project

AgeUK Enfield is currently participating in the above project.

This local partnership initiative is currently in operation within the borough. Funding has been received from the Department of Health to help support people with keeping warm and well during a period of severe cold weather.

Age UK Enfield is just one of the beneficiary organisations who have received an allocation of this grant funding and will be using it to help keep older people warm and well at home this winter.

The fund supports a variety of things from purchasing blankets, heaters, insulation materials or emergency food supplies in addition to providing information, advice and practical home improvements through frontline services such as our Handy person service. The fund also helps us to provide staff to take people out shopping to help reduce falls in icy / snowy weather.

If you know an older person who might qualify for this level of support, please contact Age UK Enfield on 020 8375 4120 for more information.

Seven ideas to keep warm in the cold days ahead

- **Keep** up to date with the weather forecast. This will help you make decisions on going out or staying in.
- **Take** regular hot meals and drinks. Stock up on basic foods so you do not have to go to the shops on very cold days.
- **Keep** moving. A little activity, such as washing the dishes, dusting and vacuuming will get your circulation going.
- **Wear** layers. Wrap up warm even indoors. Lots of thin layers of clothes are best because they trap warm air between them.
- **Wear** warm clothing in bed and use a hot water bottle or electric blanket, but not both as a leaking or burst water bottle could lead to electrocution.
- **Fit** thick curtains and draft excluders under doors and tuck curtains behind radiators to keep in heat.
- **And** lastly if you think its too dangerous to go out, don't go out. If you are worried about slipping over in ice and snow it is advisable to stay indoors where you are safe and warm.

Chris Rask

Chair of Trustees
Ruth Winston Centre

Call the home heat helpline

0800 33 66 99 it's as simple as that. It's a free phone service set up to tackle fuel poverty and help vulnerable people worried about their bills. It will help you to access information, schemes and services to all the help and support that is currently available.

The Helpline is primarily for people of pensionable age, families on low incomes and those with disabilities or long-term health problems. If you are uncertain whether you qualify, just give them a call to find out – and you don't have to be the bill payer to contact them.

**The Glasgow- based home heat Helpline will give you advice on :
Reduced or "social" tariffs which offer more affordable energy prices**

Grants for free home insulation with no means-testing for the over 70s

Benefit entitlement checks to see if you are missing out

Safety checks on appliances

Priority service register for people with disabilities and special needs

Flexible payment options for people in fuel debt

Although each energy company has its own system of deciding who they will help, in most cases assistance is provided for people with pension credit, income support, housing benefit, council tax benefit, disability living allowance, attendance allowance and child tax benefit earning less than £16,040.

As well as providing help through the grants and assistance minefield, the Helpline can direct you to other support services such as:

Warm Front – a government-funded service providing free insulation and replacement heating systems

Energy Saving Trust advice centres

Home improvement agencies such as Care and Repair

Benefit teams at the DWP

Use less energy – save more money

The days of cheap gas and electricity are over. Small changes that we can all make each day can produce huge results. If we all turned off the TV, radio and other gadgets instead of leaving them on stand-by we can save money and reduce CO2 emissions to help the environment.

Turn lights off when you don't need them on, reduce the temperature of the washing machine and don't use the dishwasher until it is fully loaded – small actions like these can produce big results over a year in savings and it doesn't really change your quality of life!

Heating the home is the best place to start saving money. Turning the thermostat down just one degree centigrade can cut the cost of your heating by 10 per cent. Try turning the thermostat down to 21C in stages of one degree over a couple of weeks.

You may consider fitting individual radiator or heater thermostats in bedrooms to set the heating at the right level in each room. You may consider switching off radiators in any rooms you are not using and keeping as many doors shut – there's no point in burning energy to heat spare rooms.

A bedroom temperature of 16-20C and a bathroom at 21C should be fine for most people – not for my wife we hear you say – but we are all – or nearly all are guilty of leaving the heating on constantly and relying on the main thermostat to control the temperature, instead of using timer settings.

What about your boiler?

If your boiler is more than 15 years old it should be replaced. Grants are available to help with the cost of getting a new one. Just ring the Home Heat free Helpline **0800 33 66 99**. It's important too to get your boiler checked every year. You can arrange this through Age UK Enfield's Handyperson service – call **Age UK Enfield on 020 8375 4120** or the Gas Safe Register of qualified engineers on 0800 408 5500.

And Insulation?

Having the right level of insulation can save you money and if you have cavity walls it's estimated the saving could be as much as 15% of your energy bills if you have them insulated as well.

So now check your loft insulation. Ten years ago the advice was to have four to six inches of insulation. Now the conventional standard is about 10 inches or 270mm. This too can cut your bills by up to 15%.

Everyone over the age of 70 is entitled to free insulation from their energy company, but most energy companies give everyone else at least a 50% grant for loft and cavity wall insulation. This applies to families on low incomes, people with disabilities and those with long-term health conditions may also qualify. ~ ring the Home Heat free Helpline 0800 33 66 99 to see if you are entitled.

Setting the temperature levels correctly and having modern insulation installed can help to reduce that winter heating bill by up to 40% - so it's definitely worth looking at.

Hints, tips & advice

Immersion heaters do not need to be switched on until 45 minutes before you need hot water. Keeping them on all day can cost you a penny a minute.

Hot water tanks should be lagged with at least 75mm of insulation, If you still have a bare copper one, you could be wasting 75% of the cost of heating water.

Radiators should not be blocked by furniture or covered by curtains. If they are most of the heat will not be going into the room.

Kitchen freezers always need to be kept fairly full. An empty freezer uses more energy than a full one. As much as a third of your electricity bill goes on keeping frozen food frozen and running the fridge.

Washing clothes is best done at 30C. Washing at 60C uses more energy and costs twice as much to heat the water. Clothes can be cleaned just as well at lower temperatures. Avoid half-load options in dishwashers and washing machines as you are using almost as much energy as a full load.

Food can be allowed to defrost in the fridge overnight using less energy than defrosting in the microwave. But watch the instructions in case meals are best cooked from frozen.

Keep the cold out and warmth in

Draught-proofing kits from DIY stores can help block out draughts coming in from external doors, windows and the letterbox. If the chimney is not in use you can get a chimney balloon fitted or have the chimney top capped – saving a huge amount of heat.

But never light a fire with these devices in place. **For advice call the National Association of Chimney Sweeps 01785 811 732 – bet you didn't know there was one!**

The Forum presents

Warm homes and Healthy people meeting

a conference sponsored by the Department of Health to be held 11am-2pm on 27 March 2012 at

the Dugdale Centre (Corner of Cecil Road & London Road, Enfield)

Experts will advise you how to keep warm, save on energy bills, find what opportunities there are in Enfield to lead a more active life and also to talk to Enfield's health trainers and more.

For this ticketed event places are limited to 100 so phone Louise Daniels on 0208 379 5200 or email louise.daniels@enfield.gov.uk now to reserve your place. A free light lunch will be provided. Registration from 10.30am onwards.

Winter brings different health problems

NHS North Central London – which covers Enfield, Barnet, Haringey, Camden and Islington - is committed to ensuring that quality healthcare services are easily accessible for the local community. Every year during the winter months, the NHS can experience a surge in demand for emergency health care services, putting extra pressure on NHS services throughout the winter season

Freezing temperatures cause some health problems that only appear, flare-up or become much more common when the temperature drops. Colds and flu and the winter vomiting bug, norovirus, are more common in the winter months. The cold weather aggravates respiratory illnesses such as asthma and COPD (chronic obstructive pulmonary disease).

Circulatory diseases also get worse in winter as the cold weather causes blood pressure to rise because your heart has to work harder to keep you warm. The NHS treats more people for heart attacks in winter than at any other time of year. Icy weather conditions can also lead to an increase in personal injuries which inevitably adds to demand on emergency health services.

Outside temperatures can plummet to freezing and below at any time. We are all more likely to feel the chill, but cold weather snaps can lead to very serious health problems, especially amongst the elderly and the vulnerable. There are many ways to stay healthy during this cold season.

Get a free seasonal flu jab

Although the flu can be mild for most people, it can also cause serious illnesses, such as pneumonia or bronchitis. You are more at risk if you have a long-term health condition, are older, or are pregnant. For this winter's jab, the vaccination contains H1N1 to protect you against swine flu. If you are within the at-risk group, and haven't had the flu jab you should contact your GP or participating pharmacy.

Eat well

Eating regular meals will help keep your energy levels up during winter. Food is a vital source of energy, which helps to keep your body warm. Try to make sure you have hot meals and drinks regularly throughout the day.

Heat your home well

Setting your heating to the right temperature by setting it to 18-21C or 64-70F you can keep your home warm and your bills as low as possible.

To keep safe and warm at home during the night you should:

- * **Try** to keep the temperature above 18°C (65°F) in your bedroom overnight

- * Open the window or door a little at night for ventilation if you use a fire or heater in your bedroom during winter
- * **Never** use hot water bottles in the same bed as an electric blanket, even if the blanket is switched off
- * **Unplug** blankets before you go to bed, unless they have a thermostat control for safe all-night use
- * **Get** your electric blanket tested every three years for safety

Stay active

Exercise is good for your overall health and it can keep you warm in winter. Even a small amount of exercise can bring health benefits. If possible, try to move around at least once an hour.

Get financial support

There are grants, benefits and sources of advice available to make your home more energy efficient, improve your heating or help with bills. You can find out if you are eligible by visiting:

- * Winter fuel payments - www.direct.gov.uk/winterfuel
- * Warm Front scheme - http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/Environmentandgreenerliving/Energyandwatersaving/Energygrants/DG_10018661 - 0800 316 2805
- * Cold weather payment - www.direct.gov.uk/coldweatherpayment

Look after yourself and others

Take care to dress for the weather outside. On cold days try to avoid going outside but if you need to, remember to wrap up warm. Wear flat boots or shoes with non-slip soles. Wearing several thinner layers of clothing is better than one or two thick layers of clothing.

Falls are one of the most common causes of accidental death or serious injury amongst the elderly; so if you have an older relative or neighbour, look out for them during these cold and icy weather conditions to make sure they are safe and well.

Cold weather brings risks to vulnerable people across society, including older people and people with long-term medical conditions.

It is vital people look after themselves and stay warm and healthy over the winter months. We are asking local residents to check if their elderly or vulnerable neighbours are coping over the winter period.

Popping in for a chat or asking someone if they need any help with their shopping could make a big difference to someone who is struggling in the cold weather.

If you are worried about a relative or an elderly neighbour, contact your local council. You can also call the free Age UK advice line on 0800 169 6565."

Make a note and call the home heat helpline 0800 33 66 99

Campaigners criticise Warm Home scheme for failing to reach those in need

Britain's biggest pensioner organisation, the National Pensioners Convention (NPC) has warned that the government's new Warm Home Discount (WHD) scheme needs urgent reform to prevent hundreds of thousands of older people missing out on much needed support with their energy bills.

Under the WHD scheme, participating energy suppliers give a rebate of £120 on their electricity bill to a specified group of their older customers on low incomes, known as the Core Group. For the first year of the scheme, 2011/12, eligibility for the Core Group rebate is linked just to those on the Guarantee Credit element of Pension Credit. This criteria will be widened over the next three years.

In addition, participating energy suppliers also have discretion to extend support to those low income and vulnerable households who are not part of the Core Group, known as the Broader Group. But the NPC is concerned that the government and the big six energy companies are not doing enough to publicise or explain the scheme to those who might benefit.

For example:

- * The big six energy companies have adopted different criteria for the Broader Group, with some being more inclusive than others. Three companies only give additional support to pensioners who are disabled, whereas another offers support to those below a certain income
- * British Gas has now closed the wider support scheme for anyone who joined after October 11 2011 and do not intend to open it again until the end of 2012. Anyone who switches to British Gas now could therefore miss out on support this year.
- * E.ON has also closed the wider scheme to new customers.
- * EDF appears to be the only company that has actually written to their customers about the WHD scheme.
- * There is a website called www.homeheathelpline.org.uk set up by Energy UK sponsored by the big six energy companies, but it makes absolutely no mention anywhere of the WHD scheme.

Dot Gibson, NPC general secretary said: **"It is completely unacceptable that the Warm Home Discount scheme appears to be a shambles. There has not been enough publicity about the scheme, it's too complicated and pensioners are unsure whether they qualify for extra help or not. The cost of fuel is rising and the government cut to the winter fuel allowance means that pensioners need all the help they can get to keep warm this winter."**

"Yet neither the government nor the big six energy companies seem particularly bothered about letting people know what help is available. It's no good simply relying on a message on a website, when the vast majority of older people don't even own a computer."

The NPC is calling for:

- 1 The big six energy companies to adopt the widest possible criteria for the Broader Scheme and open it to all new customers who are eligible
- 2 The government and the big six energy companies to publicise the WHD scheme to their customers, especially those who do not have access to the internet
- 3 The government to raise the winter fuel allowance to £500 for every pensioner household

Note: The British Gas eligibility for the Broader Group scheme offers support to:

- * Consumers who are in receipt of benefits and have a vulnerable condition
- * Consumers who have an annual household income of less than £16,190 and a vulnerable condition
- * Consumers who have an annual household income of less than £16,190 and are spending more than 10% of their income to provide adequate heating (21 degrees for main living room and 18 degrees for other occupied rooms)

Spread the message: Cold Kills!

Why is it that so many older people ignore the warnings that cold weather is a real health hazard. Is it because when we were younger our bodies were more resistant? That we were more active? Why is it we don't always recognise that as we get older, we slow down, need more layers of clothing?

Let's face it. We too often dismiss the warnings because we've lived through so many winters, a bit of **"been there, done it"** bravado and we don't easily accept that our resistance levels decline with age.

So our first message is please don't dismiss the cold weather warnings as some kind of fuddy-duddy interference in your daily routine. Older people who live in cold homes are at risk of becoming seriously ill. Exposure to the cold causes blood pressure to rise, increasing the chance of heart attacks or stroke in the winter months.

Living in the cold can cause or exacerbate respiratory problems, lower your immunity to infections and, in extreme cases, lead to hypothermia.

But these risks can be reduced by doing simple things, such as, eating regular hot meals, keeping the living room warm by day and closing the bedroom windows at night.

The Over 50s Forum and many others are campaigning to reduce the numbers of people living in what is called **"fuel poverty"**. That is, people who are forced to spend more than 10% of their income on fuel bills. The numbers of people affected in this way runs into many millions – about one in every four households - so it is not just because pensioner incomes are not keeping pace with the increased costs of fuel and food.

Releasing people from the stress of high energy bills and the fear of getting into debt could reduce the numbers of older people becoming depressed and cut the visits to GP surgeries.

- * **We want the government to scrap VAT on energy bills.**
- * **We want all the energy companies to produce cheaper and more easily understood tariffs to lower our bills.**
- * **We would like to see more preventative measures introduced well before the cold spell arrives.**
- * **We think that all sections of the community should make tackling winter hazards a priority to help prevent falls and the higher death rate. Clearing more roads and pavements of snow would be a start.**

For every additional winter death, there are an estimated eight admissions to hospital, 32 attendances at A&E departments and 30 calls to the social services.

In a wealthy, advanced country like Britain families should not be forced to decide between heating or eating. Fuel-poor households should not have to decide whether to pay the gas and electricity bill and give up other essentials, or live in a cold, possibly damp, home that is a danger to health.

The Government has a statutory target to eradicate fuel poverty by 2016. With energy bills still on the rise, it is highly unlikely this target will be reached. But we can all help to ensure that people in fuel poverty can claim all of the benefits they are entitled to.

They should contact the London Warm Zone on 0800 389 7268 for benefits advice as well as checking whether they are eligible for free or discounted heating and insulation measures.