**THE QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF ANGLIA REGION PENSIONERS ASSOCIATION (NPC) . SUMMER 2022 – Issue 2**

**ANGLIA IS ONE OF 16 REGIONS OF THE NATIONAL PENSIONERS CONVENTION – A NON-PARTY POLITICAL ORGANISATION RUN MAINLY BY VOLUNTEERS WITH THE OBJECT OF WORKING FOR THE RIGHTS OF**

**TODAY’S & TOMORROW’S PENSIONERS.**

Much has been happening these last three months and the most I can offer you on two sides of this A4 is a flavour with the hope you will either read more on our websites or contact Head Office for hard copy of source materials.

National website: [www.npcuk.org](http://www.npcuk.org/)

Head Office Tel. 020 7837 6622 Jonathan.

Regional website: [www.anglia.com](http://www.anglia.com/)

Telephone 01502 563208 Chris - Chair;

and 01502 587287 Aisha – Secretary.

**NATIONAL UPDATE**

1. Jan Shortt, our General Secretary gave a speech from the platform in Trafalgar Square at the major street demo in London ‘We Demand Better’ on June 18th calling on the government to take responsibility to help those struggling with the present cost of living crisis. The proposals put forward in response are nowhere near sufficient.

2. Evidence submitted to a new enquiry into digital transformation of NHS which is moving at such a pace as to cause unfairness/disadvantage among older generation without family or the means to be online or both.

3.Webinar meeting held 16 June discussed government’s further privatisation of the NHS thus ensuring private enterprise have a say in what happens within the NHS. Clinical Care Groups (CCG) created in 2012 are now replaced by 42 new Integrated Care System Boards (ICSB) in charge of the NHS. Secretary of State given new powers to direct NHS England and to intervene over changes to local services and to allow for discharge of patients where NO ASSESSMENT of their ongoing needs have been made before they leave hospital. Despite the efforts of NPC and other groups to stop the new ICS Boards these were brought into force by new Health & Care legislation from 01 July 2022.

4. Assisted Dying Webinar by NPC to ensure members had all facts without NPC supporting such action. The Medical Professional Panel reviewed the law in countries where laws currently exist and came down on the side of the Oregon USA pathway which has been going successfully for 25 years. In this, the patient when diagnosed with only 6 months to live is given the medication to end life and must be administered by the patient when feel ready.

5. Current cost of living crisis: NPC has called on OFGEM to work with the government on energy price astronomical increases. The current help offered is paltry, expensive to administer and effectively a sticking plaster to an open vein. Energy bill support £400 per household would barely cover one month’s payment by October; Pension cost of living payment £300 per household - caveats being not clear when and how and in no way will help with huge increases in price of food, energy and other bills.

6. Disability living allowance is £150 per claimant with the local authority seeking to recover over £200 a month from life-long disabled people with no means of paying! Causing terrible distress.

7. Council tax rebate - if you are on direct debit it should be paid in or deducted from amount due. Otherwise it’snot clear how it is to be recovered. Again, much time and money wasted by the government in admin costs.

8. Extending Retirement Age – The government is forging ahead and extending retirement age to 68 despite clear evidence provided by NPC highlighting the unfairness of such age increase especially for shop and factory workers. Not least because there appears to be a downward shift in life expectancy among such men and women who in any event have paid their dues.

9. NPC have made strenuous submissions to the Independent Review in April 2022 advocating for a Commissioner for Older People in England citing the positive work being carried out by Commissioners in Wales and Northern Ireland. The silence is deafening.

10 Jan Shortt wrote to the Prime Minister in January this year about support for Older People. The Minister for Works and Pensions replied pointing out all the benefits already being paid out to pensioners which left me wondering why I am not lazing on the Amalfi Coast in a 5 Star hotel. Oh, wait, the actual pension we get in this country is less than Mexicans receive and that is why the government need to top up our below cost of living pensions. Yet they manage to make it sound as though we are at fault! Those carrying out the Review judiciously ignored the evidence in Jan’s letter pointing out the true state of the majority of pensioners in the UK, worsened by suspension of the Triple lock last year and rise in inflation. Jan also had to write to the BBC complaining about the biased reporting that pensioners will be getting a 10% rise next year when the Triple lock will be implemented. They failed to say 10% of what. Certainly not enough to meet the new cost of living crisis. As we all know, percentages do not pay bills!

11. Frozen Pensions – NPC have been lobbying the government for many years over this unfair practice which affects 500,000 ex-pats who still do not receive increases to their pension unless there is a reciprocal arrangement with the country or residence. Canada tried to set up such an arrangement with this government but was refused!!

12. NPC have expressed concern at the number of civil servants losing their jobs as well as postal workers who have been downgraded to a basic wage while doing a specialised, skilled job.

LOCAL NEWS

Lowestoft Branch has acquired a couple of new members following dissemination of Issue 1 of this newsletter. We continue to meet the first Friday of each month except August when we have a social instead. September’s meeting however will be on Friday 9 at the 60+ Club in Lowestoft near the Library 10.00 for 10.15 am.

The May Old Grey Matter article by Chris, our Chair published in the East Anglian Daily Times was on ‘Keep our NHS Public’. In June the article was on ‘Care and Responsibility’. Chris and Ian campaigned in Norwich specifically for a better system of Health & Social Care in Norfolk & Waveney where there are real fears for the most vulnerable within our society. On 23 July, the article was on ‘Policy! Policy! Policy!’ This pointed out that around 160,000 of the Conservative membership will have a say in who will be the next Tory Leader (and hence our Prime Minister) whereas NPC are mandated to formulate policy followed by their more diverse membership, almost ten times that number, at our biennial conference held in May this year – representative democracy in action.

The article ended with the concern about the environment and what is being done about it - rising sea levels around GB coast, flash-floods, Avian Flu and raging wild-fires all happening here in the UK. Environmental issues can no longer be put on the back burner yet the government continue to bury its head seeking instead to remove our basic human rights to live a decent life with food, shelter and warmth!! Not to mention a decent future for our young and respect & dignity through the generations for all including us aged.

Further, Care Providers having to rely on food banks while working so hard under great pressure is untenable while giant corporations make billions every day.

**We look forward to welcoming more new members. Come and join us – Business and Social as usual.**

Aisha Jermy – Secretary- Anglia NPC