

HORNSEY PENSIONERS

www.hornseypag.org.uk

Hornsey Pensioners Action Group serves pensioners within Hornsey & Wood Green and other neighbouring parliamentary constituencies

February 2022 - Bulletin 2

What Can We Do About The Energy Cost Crisis?

Speaker: Molly Chambers (Project Development Coordinator, London and East of England, for National Energy Action)

Time & Date: WEDNESDAY February 16th 2022

1.30pm Start

**Venue: Hornsey Parish Church Hall,
Cranley Gardens, N10 3AH**



*Entrance on Cranley Gardens through car park. Doors open from 1pm.
NB The notice saying the car park is only for church users includes us
as we are using the hall!*

All help by members welcome.

Report of the Annual HPAG Party, December 15th, 2021



Clive as DJ with new volunteer, Mike Seed, in background. Ann as Mistress of Ceremony gave an appreciation of Clive's long and very wide-ranging and competent Committee work, especially his masterstroke of applying for Lottery Funding and thus us being awarded £9,000 for our publicity drive which resulted in a great increase in membership.

Report of the Annual HPAG Party, 2021 Continued



Fortunately, our annual party went ahead before the concern about the Omicron virus was too high. We had 27 people in attendance wearing their masks, with the hall well ventilated and an enjoyable occasion it was! **Our special thanks to all members who helped us.**

Our refreshment organiser, Janet (Wilson), organised a wonderful buffet with the help of Ros and Ursula.

Thanks to Peggy- Sue (now a Member) and Roger, who performed some exciting tango dances but alas, not many of the members joined in dancing at the end of the party.

In the image below, members are ready for Audrey (our raffle Queen, alas, now to retire). Members are recovering from the quiz- supposedly done individually.



With thanks to Sarah for creating the quiz but unfortunately, she was unable to be the quiz mistress. There were 3 topics- *Haringey, London Underground stations, Christmas*. No one got a nil score but no one got full marks either, in any of the sections, so it was a good quiz.

NB. Though retiring from their official duties, Audrey and Clive will still continue as members and were given this year's membership subscription as a thank you gift for all their hard work.

Ham and High Article

Please see our website to read the article Janet Shapiro has published in the *Ham and High* newspaper on our behalf on 13th January regarding the problems of non IT communication.

www.hornseypensionersactiongroup.org.uk

Message from Lauritz

Please see below for some of the services available in Haringey:

<https://www.haringey.gov.uk/community/connected-communities/resources>.

They can be printed off. The most relevant ones for the elderly are *My Money, My Home, My Community, My Health, My Council and My Plan (for self isolation)*. Ann received the latter booklet through her door recently.

2022 Subscriptions for Hornsey Pensioners Action Group Now Due.

We are keeping the annual subscription level the same as last year's at £8 for single and £12 for double households. All extra donations are most welcome.

If not able to attend meetings, please send **cash or cheques** payable to **Hornsey Pensioners Action Group** to my address:

Ann Anderson Membership Secretary HPAG
117 Redston Road, London, N8 7HG.

Paying by **direct bank transfer** please make to **Lloyds Bank**

Account name: **Hornsey Pensioners Action Group**

Sort code: **30-99-86**

Account number: **0159 7043**

Please put your name as the reference.

Please then also email Ann: awarr@btinternet.com to say you have made the transfer.

Energy Advice Champion Volunteer Opportunity

As energy prices increase, many households will be faced with the difficult decision of choosing between heating and eating. We want to support these people and will be training local residents to become Energy Champions and help families in their community access energy saving advice and financial support to help keep them safe and well this winter.

(NB. Member Anne Gray says that in the Brent project the public seem to trust advice from the 'grandmother' age group).

If you would like to help us make a difference, please contact volunteer@publicvoice.london

If you have any questions, please get in touch whenever you have time, thanks.

Paulina Laurel, Project Officer Public Voice CIC

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Do you have a family story to fill one page of our next Bulletin?

Please contact Ann

Member Allen Astles Tells Us of His Problems with Pension Payments. Be Warned!

I normally receive my State Pension every 4 weeks, when it is paid into my bank account. However, I noticed that I hadn't received any State Pension payment by the due date in November or December, although I had received my Winter Fuel Allowance payment.

I phoned the Department for Work and Pensions and after a long wait, I was eventually referred to a member of staff who was able to look up my case. He told me that the information on the computer said "Account suspended", and that this was why I had not received my pension. It was not clear why this had happened, although the staff member said something about letters being returned from my address, possibly indicating a change of circumstances. I said that I was not aware of any letters being returned. Anyhow, the helpful staff member said that he could reinstate my pension for the two missing months although it would take about 5 days for the payment to get through to my bank. The payment did go through after a few days, however, there was no proper explanation as to why my account had been suspended. I did eventually receive a standard letter from the Department for Work and Pensions headed "State Pension - About your change of circumstances" thanking me for telling them that my circumstances had changed, although in actual fact my circumstances had not changed!

I wonder if other people have had similar experiences?

Family Story, from Member Vaughan Melzer

Douglas Munro is my husband and was born in 1930. His father came from a working-class family, many of whom were miners, living on a tiny Scottish slate island called Easdale. They were poorly paid and had no certainty of long-term work. Douglas's father had fallen in love with a Welsh nurse whom he met during the Great War and being practical, he decided to become a Minister. Going into the Church would provide a regular, if low, income and even more importantly, a house. He was a Gaelic speaker, which gave him useful currency for the Ministry, particularly in the remoter areas, where many people only spoke Gaelic.

This is how, in 1929 the young Munro couple, with their first-born, Donald, and daughter, Megan, came to sail to St. Kilda, the remotest inhabited island of Britain to become its next Minister. It is about 40 miles from the nearest land and ships bring provisions and post came only twice a year. A single nurse provided medical care for the islanders, and the Reverend Munro provided them with spiritual care. Apart from a local flock of wild sheep, the only other source of abundant food were the sea birds, which the young men would trap and catch in the most dangerous of ways, hanging from the steep cliffs. But over the years the number of young men had diminished as they left the island, looking for other ways to live and earn their living. This depletion was causing a population imbalance and threatening the very survival of the St. Kildans.



See people leaving the Kirk on St. Kilda

Soon after the arrival of Minister Munro, the people approached him to speak of their concerns and asked him to negotiate on their behalf with the government in London to finance an evacuation of all the inhabitants and find homes for them on the mainland. This now famous evacuation, took place on 29th August 1930 and the nurse, and Munro family sailed on the ship that took the last of the St. Kildans, and some of their animals off the island. During that day, Megan, then a little girl of four, vividly remembers her twelve-year-old brother rushing into the house crying, "Father, they're throwing the dogs over the cliffs to drown." As shocking and cruel this may sound, it was the kindest thing the people could do, as they would not be able to protect and feed the dogs and they were not allowed to take them onto the ship.



Donald's family and the nurse the day they leave the island

Douglas did not experience any of this trauma, but he was probably the last child ever to have been conceived on St. Kilda as he was born six weeks later, on Easdale on the 19th of October. His mother told him that she would not have survived the birth had she been still on St. Kilda.

Ministers had to go where and when they were told, and from St. Kilda the family were sent to Barra in the Outer Hebrides, where their last child, Ella, was born. Soon after they were sent to Kyleakin on Skye, where Douglas spent most of his childhood, but left Scotland in 1947 to come to London. He hardly knew his older brother who was soon called up for the War and who, tragically,

was killed in 1944 in Normandy. His parents never got over this loss but their lasting legacy for the remaining three children was to promote a high-quality education. Both girls went to university, a big achievement then, and Douglas eventually convinced the Civil Service in London that he wasn't a mere *teuchter*, and he became a Senior Civil Servant before retiring early.

Edited by Janet Shapiro and Ann Anderson. Produced by Mia Anderson

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