

Ham & High – column due on June 30th 2023

The NHS that so many of us depend upon was 75 on July 5th.

Our earlier January 26th column mentioned that the BMA had published a warning in 2019 by John Lister of patient safety concerns caused by NHS underfunding. We now expect some admissions of inadequate funding from the inquiry into how prepared the Government was for Covid. This is ongoing and concludes in 2026. The first nurse to contribute to the inquiry confirmed John Lister's warning.

'Professional lead in infection, prevention and control (IPC) at the Royal College of Nursing Rose Gallagher MBE confirmed the horrendous shortage of trained nurses when Covid struck. '

The government must heed wise advice to substantially increase NHS resources to levels achieved in comparable EU countries. NHS staff must be paid fair wages now as a matter of justice and good economic sense. While the PM dithers the NHS loses valuable trained staff.

Locally, many of us attended the West Haringey Mild Frailty workshop led by Paul Allen on Wednesday June 28th. As head of Integrated Care and Frailty NHS Haringey Paul had spoken to our group in March. Slides were sent ahead of the meeting; these did not dodge the complexity of health service provision but emphasised the need for partnership amongst providers of services, whether managed by the NHS or the local authority. Engagement of residents was also encouraged. Members from Hornsey Pensioners, Haringey Keep Our NHS Public and other groups attended. Many spoke of their experiences of caring, coping with illness or disability with varying support; their stories corroborated the approach recommended in the presentation talk.

The meeting was held at The Haynes Dementia Hub, at Hornsey Central Neighbourhood Centre. This was the site of the old Hornsey Central Cottage Hospital, the focus of many local campaigns. The earliest was the 'Hornsey Central Hospital Campaign Group' set up 1998 with secretary Roderick Benziger who kept meticulous records that may be viewed.

The group conducted a local survey of residents, from which emerged a consensus for a joint health and social services provision run at Hornsey Central. A holistic approach was envisaged with provision of respite beds. In 2004, plans to deliver what residents wanted appeared well advanced, but funding options collapsed by March 2005.

Fortunately, there was secure funding for the Dementia Centre from the Lewis and Mary Haynes Trust; this was built later and is well used.

399 words

Janet Shapiro on behalf Hornsey Pensioners Action Group