

Report from Jeremy Corbyn MP



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At the annual “Finfest” held in Finsbury Park (16/09), a special tent was erected to enable the local community to pay homage to **Margot Sreberny**. Margot’s family suffered from the Nazi occupation of Europe and she was forced into exile in Britain as a young girl, via the Kinder Transport. She then dedicated her life to social justice, human rights, and in particular, to improving the lot of the Finsbury Park community. I first met Margot in 1980 and she was Chair of Finsbury Park Forum and (later) Action Group, and was delighted when we finally got government recognition through the Single Regeneration Budget for the area. Whilst none of us would pretend that Finsbury Park was perfect, the efforts that Margot put into uniting communities and people, and getting everyone access to services will never be forgotten. Her death was very sad, and a remarkable number of people attended the memorial event at which I was privileged to be a speaker.

The killing of Martin Dinnegan in June was a very shocking affair, as were the **deaths of other young people** in the UK by knife crime this year. There have been a tragically large number of knife and gun related incidents, one (gun) happened in our own constituency. There must be a number of measures taken to deal with this problem, and primarily there must be the inclusion of youth and youth culture in society, and greater opportunities for young people.

Locally, the response to these tragedies has been a very effective one by the Safer

Neighbourhood teams of the police, and initiatives such as the Faith Forum peace walk, as well as events such as the public meeting (27/09) that I chaired at the St Mellitus church, attended by over 200 people. At that meeting we held a serious discussion about the many related social issues that lead to an increase in violence and isolation of young people. We desperately need more and better youth facilities, and a greater sense of inclusion by young people. Schools have to remember that they have a responsibility to ensure that every child achieves their greatest potential in school. Sometimes the League Tables hide the very important but less academic work that is done in schools, and which can contribute to tackling behaviour problems in their very early stages.

The Government’s Green Paper on **housing** has been published, and the closing date for responses was 15th October. As well as hosting a public meeting in the borough on 9th October (at the Learning Skills Voluntary Centre) to hear opinions from tenants and residents groups, I have sent in a substantial response (attached, along with comments made at the meeting). The good news is that the government has pledged to provide £6.5 billion over the next three years for social housing, but we need to ensure that this money is used to provide good quality homes in areas of high demand such as our own. The Council is building 100 new council homes which are very welcome, but what is not welcome has been the sale of council-

owned buildings in Islington, some of which could have been converted into housing. The continued financial pressure on housing associations which encourages them to dispose of some assets in order to refurbish the rest, is another major problem. We have a desperate housing situation and it will only be solved by a national effort to ensure everyone is decently housed.

I was appointed to lead an Inter-Parliamentary (Union) delegation to **Burundi** for 5 days. Burundi is probably Africa's poorest country and has suffered almost as much as Rwanda from civil conflict. Over 300,000 people, out of a population of 6 million, died in the recent round of conflict. I have produced a full report on the delegation's visit which will be available on the website. I feel very strongly that the international aid programs (Dfid very much included) there are effective, but further support is needed for the large numbers of refugees who are now returning home from Tanzania and neighbouring countries. To its credit, the president has announced that henceforth healthcare will be free for under 5s and nursing mothers, and that primary education will also be free. In the context of Burundi, these are amazing achievements, but will require a lot of international support to come to fruition.

The following is an outline of **selected entries only from my diary** since parliament rose at the end of July:

19/07: I was delighted to attend **Duncombe School's** Leaving assembly with their superb production of the Wizard of Oz at this excellent community primary school, which goes from strength to strength.

19/07: **Centre 404** had their annual meeting at which I thanked everyone there for the excellent work that they do in supporting people and families, and special thanks to Jean Wilson after her stint as chair, and as a

superb advocate in the cause of disabled people.

Body and Soul has now moved to its new and splendidly converted building in Rosebury Avenue. The organisation does an excellent job in assisting people, particularly youngsters who suffer from HIV / Aids.

The Light Project International is a parent support organisation for African and Caribbean refugees and asylum seekers' children, young people and families in Islington, and more. They held an event (20/07) at St Mellitus Church at which much discussion was had about the difficulties of bringing up children in inner city London, and solutions that can be applied.

The Neighbourhood Watch team in **Finsbury Park** organised an excellent family day at the Royal Northern Gardens (23/07). In conjunction with the Mayor of Islington, I enjoyed delivering a short message of support for community activities which contribute to making our area safer.

I had a meeting (24/07) with Marie-Thérèse Nlandu, former presidential candidate and party leader from the **Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)** who was arrested following the presidential elections. I had tabled an EDM in support of a due process of law in the Congo, and fortunately this pressure and that from other people in other parliaments had the desired effect and she was indeed released. She thanked those of us who supported her right to legal justice.

I joined a gathering of MPs outside parliament, to support a One Voice (25/07) statement calling for peace among Israelis and **Palestinians**.

On **Sky News** (25/07) I participated in a discussion with David Heath and Dame Pauline Neville Jones about anti terrorist legislation and what real security is.

On 27/07 I was the guest on **Al Jazeera News**.

I took part in a demonstration at Islington Town Hall (27/07) in support of more investment in **social Housing**.

I had a meeting with the Bengali community at the Red Rose Tandoori (28/07) to discuss the situation in **Bangladesh**. I also chaired a successful meeting on this subject in the House of Commons very recently (16/10).

I took part in the **Islam Channel special** program concerning Muslim/Islamic awareness (28/07).

31/07: I spent some time visiting some streets around **Pemberton Gardens** to meet local residents to discuss issues of local interaction with the police.

Later on in the day I also attended **Mount Pleasant** Sorting Office in order to meet members of the CWU (Communication Workers Union) to support their jobs and pensions.

31/07: I visited **Cornwallis Adventure playground** to meet the youngsters using the facility, and to thank them for the work that they do in their very effective summer project.

I went to meet with the **Turkish and Kurdish community** and representative, Ibrahim Dogus (01/08) and other members of the community.

I visited the **Lambo Day Centre** (02/08) regarding their concerns on the review of Mental Health Services, and to offer them my full support in the excellent work that they do.

I was a guest speaker at the **Mental Health Forum** meeting at Annette Rd (03/08).

04/08: I spent the morning meeting residents in **Highbury East ward** and delivering copies of my last community report.

28/07: I spent the morning meeting residents in **Mildmay ward** and delivering copies of my last community report.

06/08: I chaired the **Hiroshima Day Commemoration** event in Tavistock Square, where a number of guest speakers including the 101 year old campaigner, Rose Hacker.

04/09: I attended the **Amnesty International Gallery** exhibition in support of my friend Carlos Reyes-Manzo and his updated photo exhibition of the Saharwi refugees.

05/09: I took a group of young people from the **Muslim Welfare House** on a tour of parliament and subsequently had a discussion with them about their perception of parliamentary democracy and life in North London.

05/09: Together with Councillor Fox Smith I spoke at the **New Orleans Estate Tenants Association** (TRA) public meeting in response to the shooting incident that took place a couple of weeks before. I was impressed by officers from Operation Trident and the Safer Neighbourhoods Team.

06/09: I visited the **African Swahili Community Project** at Waterloo Road to discuss the situation facing our community and the attack that had taken place on their building.

I went to the **Islington Community Chest Fund** event (06/09) to celebrate the Cripplegate Foundation's excellent community awards scheme that has done so much to support local community organisations. I am delighted at their recognition by the Brecknock Road Estate Tenants and Residents Association in improving and upgrading the Estate's community facilities.

I met with Islington Planning Officers (07/09) to discuss the lack of an **Arsenal sports centre** and their attitude towards the new

planning process as it relates to the Arsenal Stadium.

Together with Councillor Janet Burgess I attended the **Palmer Estate Fun Day** (08/09) organised by the Peabody Trust (near Parliament Fields) in Junction Road.

I was delighted to be one of the opening speakers at the **21st Gillespie Festival** (09/09) which is a superb achievement for a park that was designated to be a warehouse until local campaigners succeeded in winning this valuable open space for the community.

I spoke at the start of the **Peace Week** walk organised by the Islington Faith Forum in Highbury Fields (09/09) in which I repeated my concerns about the terrible issues of gun and knife crime in our community. I urged people to cooperate with the police in eradicating this terrible scourge from our communities.

16/09: I met residents on the **Mayville Estate** whilst continuing distribution of my community report.

18/09: Along with Emily Thornberry I had a very useful meeting with Bob Carr of Islington police, and I am pleased with the **reduction of crime across the borough** though my concern about knife crime remains paramount.

20/09: On behalf of the advisory committee on the commemoration of the Abolition of the Slave Trade exhibition I was invited to meet a wonderful group from **Burntwood school** who had given a musical interpretation of their newly produced series of writings on slavery, in both its historical context and modern slavery.

I was a guest speaker at **Islington Mental Health forum (20/09)**, together with Councillors Janet Burgess and Theresa De Bono.

21/09: I had a very useful meeting with the **CAB London region** to advance the cause / replacement of the now closed Islington CAB.

22/09: I was guest speaker at **Northumbrian for Peace in Hexham** (probably England's most northerly town) with over 120 people attending a Saturday morning discussion about war and disarmament.

Ken Livingstone cleared the streets of central **London for cyclists** (23/09), and I cycled with Islington Cyclist Action Group from Highbury Fields, and then went on the whole route from London Bridge to the Mall. It was a great occasion and I hope it is repeated every year.

I was invited by **Amnesty International Human Rights Watch and the Refugee Council** (24/09) to be at the launch presentation of their report on **Iraqi** refugees.

26/09: I attended the **Whittington Hospital** Annual Open Meeting at which I thanked the hospital staff for their very good work, particularly the A & E Department which I was told has seen 100,000 patients in the past 12 months! The new building is very glamorous and hopefully very functional, and will be paid for eventually.

Hanley Crouch Community Association held their AGM (27/09) and welcomed the new director Angela Cairns. I was also re-elected as a trustee.

I visited the **Latin American Elderly Project** (28/09) which now meets in the Claremont mission at White Lion St, N1.

Manchester University Students Union invited me to speak at a peace event (29/09) opening session.

04/10: I took part in a very interesting symposium on Africa at **London Metropolitan University**.

Bob Gilbert, previously of Greenspace, has now been promoted to head up Islington's **sustainability program**, and I had a very useful discussion (28/09) with him about this.

In the evening I spoke at the **Richard Kirkwood Retirement** event at Ladbroke House. Richard started working for North London polytechnic in 1967 and remains a great campaigner, demonstrator and inspiring lecturer to his students. He has promised me he will not stop being active in good causes for the rest of his life.

06/10: The **Palestine Solidarity Campaign** held an international conference at the University of London Union, which included a significant number of high profile speakers from Palestine, including Dr Mustafa Barghouti, Naeem Jeenah (South Africa PSC), Sa'ad Nimr (Campaign to Free Marwan Barghouti), and more. Next year marks the 60th anniversary of the Nakba, and building a mass anti-apartheid campaign is a major aim of the organisation.

I met constituents at a **coffee morning** (08/10) at **St George's** church for residents of the Neighbouring streets.

I spoke at the **Stop the War demonstration** in Trafalgar Square (08/10) where there had been efforts to ban the demonstration under a misinterpretation of Sessional Orders which enable parliamentarians to travel to and from parliament without delay. Holding the demonstration was, in my view, a victory for free speech.

08/10: I attended **Tufnell Park Estate TRA**.

09/10: I had one of my regular meetings with Paula Khan and Rachel Tyndall, of the local **Primary Care Trust**.

Good news day for Islington (12/10): the Government announced that £37.2 million is to be made available for capital investment in

Islington schools, which will be used for improved facilities.

CND held a disarmament conference at City Hall (13&14/10) and among the many excellent contributions was one from Ms Arielle Denis, Co-president of le Mouvement de la paix in France. Other speakers included Kate Hudson, Chair of CND, and Alan McKinnon (from Scotland). I was re-elected as Vice Chair to CND.

I visited the **London Jewish Life Festival** (14/10) in Trafalgar Square and found the exhibition of Jewish life in London very well represented.

15/10: I visited **Afruka**, a locally based organisation in Essex Road which deals with the problems and consequences of trafficked children.

Please note that my parliamentary interventions are available on my website, along with regular articles that I have had published: www.jeremycorbyn.co.uk
My Advice Sessions continue as usual and the number to contact if you wish to seek assistance with a personal problem is: 020 7561 7488