

## **November Forum Meeting**

**Digipals**, set up by AgeUK Wandsworth, is a service in four libraries across Wandsworth on a rotation, most Wednesdays, 10-12, where you can take along your iPad, tablet, mobile or laptop and get help to sort out problems. No appointments needed. Check dates with AgeUK (020 8877 8949). It is largely volunteer-run, properly vetted with DBS, so it is a matter of learning from each other. Funding is only to April but maybe further funding for this service which sounds extremely valuable to us older people who came late to digital.

LG 13.11.2018

**Leonie Cooper** came to the November meeting to tell us about some of the issues which the London Assembly discusses. The Assembly is the voice of London monitoring what the Mayor is planning and holding that office to account. There are 25 members some geographical eg Leonie is elected by Wandsworth and Merton residents, and some are elected from party lists. We all have to vote twice, once for each category. The geographical members have always been from Conservative and Labour but other parties are elected from the other category.

Leonie chaired the Environment Committee for two years where she could set the agenda - a huge privilege. A report followed from discussions on fuel hardship. We all like a pleasant place to live in and this resulted in work to encourage flowers in front gardens and street trees. The Mayor of London's reports are advisory but all authorities, local councils and others, have to take account of them when they are setting plans.

Housing Strategy was a big point of the present Mayor's manifesto. There has been much comment about the lack of progress and members present brought this up. Leonie explained that London's housing programmes had been run down under the previous Mayor and it takes some time to assemble land, get plans and permissions and then get them built. Some of Sadiq Khan's plans for affordable housing should be completed in the 2019. There have been changes in Government policy which have made it easier to get mortgages but there are huge numbers in London who could never afford a mortgage and have to find rented property that they can afford. It is hoped that there will be new plans coming through for social rented property to meet these needs.

Knife crime is very worrying just now and the Mayor has said it has to be everyone's responsibility to help stop this. Parents, schools, hospitals and trusted police all have to play their part. Members said they would like to see more police on the streets. The Mayor has to accept the Government's decisions on funding and the recent budget promised no more. Changes have been made at the top with only 12 commanders in London, down from 32, and similar cuts in the ranks below this to save numbers of police on the streets.

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