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**UTTLESFORD SUPPORT GROUP**  
**NEWSLETTER/INFORMATION SHEET, August–September 2018**  
[www.parkinsonsuttlesford.org.uk](http://www.parkinsonsuttlesford.org.uk)

### **GARDEN PARTY SUCCESS**

The Uttlesford Support Group's Annual Garden Party was held on 13<sup>th</sup> June. Vivian Falk, who has done so much for the group over the years, hosted the event in her delightful garden. There was a good attendance from members, from both the Saffron Walden and Great Dunmow areas. Around 35 people were there altogether, just over half our total membership. The food and drink, raffle and music from the Clarinet Caprice Quartet were all much appreciated.

### **FUTURE MEETINGS**

- Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> August: Saffron Walden meeting at the Jubilee Gardens, 2–4pm. **Kate Riley** will be speaking about the charity [Living Room International](#), which runs a residential Hospice in Western Kenya, where Kate used to live and where she did two weeks voluntary work in January this year.
- Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> September, the Saffron Walden meeting will include a talk about the benefits of exercise for people with Parkinson's, given by fitness instructor **Paul Goddard**.
- Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> August and Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> September, Great Dunmow lunch meetings, Banks Court, 12am–2pm.

If you have suggestions for meetings or outings please do contact the committee with your ideas.

### **EXERCISE FOR PARKINSON'S**

The benefits of exercise to people with Parkinson's are well recognised. We recently featured in this newsletter a short article on the benefits of tango dancing. Probably different activities suit different people, but exercise is generally best done in a group and it can be combined with music. For people who can make it into Cambridge, music therapist Alison Shaw runs a class that provides '...fun singing and exercises to help with Parkinson's symptoms'. The class takes place 2–4pm on Fridays at the Arbury Community Centre, Campkin Road, Cambridge CB4 2LD. Alison Shaw can be contacted on 07936191655, or [ashaw.musictherapy@gmail.com](mailto:ashaw.musictherapy@gmail.com).

Closer to home there is an exercise class (run by Paul Goddard) on Monday afternoons at Little Easton Community Hall, which sets out to '...harness the benefits of intense exercise for Parkinson's patients'. The class is based on a circuit training format and has the constant presence of a trainer certified to coach the exercise methods used. Aims include: improving mobility and posture; and reducing tremor, rigidity and depression. Classes take place 2.30–3.30pm, with tea and coffee, afterwards. Paul hopes to start additional classes on Thursday afternoons. He also runs a Nordic walking group for Parkinson's on Wednesday afternoons in Thaxted (meet at 3.15pm in Margaret Street Car Park.), for which all participants must first complete a training course. Contact Paul on 07794867344, or [pwg.goddard@gmail.com](mailto:pwg.goddard@gmail.com).

Also on the theme of exercise, the Uttlesford Support Group owns a device that many people have found helps them to take exercise – a 'Wii Plus' home video game console. If you would like to borrow it, then contact Judy (committee members' addresses are at the end of this newsletter).

## RESEARCH ROUND-UP

- Exercise is also the topic of a recently published research paper published in an academic journal. It's unusual for an academic study, because it is written by a British man with Parkinson's (in his late fifties) and his physiotherapist. It describes how the patient trained for and successfully ran a marathon, five years after he was first diagnosed and with no previous marathon experience. There were many challenges along the way and the patient feels he was only able to achieve his goal thanks to considerable professional support. However, setting such a goal motivated him and enabled him to improve several aspects of his condition. [The full article is freely accessible online.](#)
- The protective effects of exercise seem to reduce the chance of developing many chronic diseases and a large study involving over 7,000 US military veterans confirms that this applies in the case of Parkinson's. Those veterans who maintained a level of physical fitness regarded as 'high' were much less likely to develop the condition than those whose fitness was 'low'. Smoking and ageing were the other risk factors emerging from the study, which is available in summary form [here](#).
- But there is a downside to some exercises. 'Contact sports' often lead to brain injuries and even when these are considered 'mild' there still seems to be an increase in the chance of developing a neurological condition. It is well known that this applies to dementia and a new study strongly suggests that Parkinson's risk is also increased. The mechanism for this appears to be the development of Lewy bodies, which are known to accumulate in the brains of people with Parkinson's. An article about the study can be read [here](#).
- It is reckoned that some 15% of cases of Parkinson's could be inherited. Scientists have been investigating mutations of the gene known as LRRK2 which, it had been thought, might be responsible for just 3% of cases. However, [new research](#) suggests that faulty versions of this gene could be involved in many more cases. This new understanding could help in the development of drugs that could help a high proportion of patients.
- There are at least 80 different known types of autoimmune disease (e.g. rheumatoid arthritis, multiple sclerosis, lupus, and type 1 diabetes) is Parkinson's one of them? Evidence that this is the case has grown, following a [German study](#) which found that T-cells (an important part of the immune system) can kill dopamine producing cells in people with the condition. Research for treatments for autoimmune diseases could therefore eventually have a useful outcome for people with Parkinson's.

## PLEASE GET IN TOUCH!

As Editor, I'm always happy to hear from members with ideas, news items or suggestions for ways in which this newsletter might be improved. In particular, it would really help to have your views on the following points.

- Would you like the newsletter to be longer *or* to be published monthly? (It is bimonthly at present.)
- Can you read it clearly? Do you think we could improve layout?
- Would you rather not be sent this newsletter at all? Please let us know if you want to come off the circulation list.
- If you are happy to continue to get the newsletter but are *not yet a member* of our local group, then please do contact us in order to join.

**Paul Chinnock**

***Parkinson's UK membership: if you are not already a member, we do encourage you to join. Please ask for a form. The fee to join is £4 a year, with an extra £6 a year to join the Uttlesford Support Group.***

**TRANSPORT:** *If you wish to attend a meeting but can't do so because of transport problems – please contact a member of the committee; we will do all we can to find a way to get you there.*

**PARKINSON'S NURSE COVERING UTTLESFORD:** *Vivienne Kavanagh 01279 621924 or 07778 934669. Unfortunately due to temporary disablement, Viv Kavanagh is currently unable to offer her clinic sessions, but she is still available to give advice over the phone.*

**LOCAL ADVISER (formerly Information and Support Worker):** *Carol Jacobs 08442 253778.*

**Uttlesford Committee:** **Chairman – to be appointed;** Secretary, Judy Millward (01763 838742); Treasurer (Donations), Tony Leek, Richmond House, Mount Pleasant, Hundon, CO10 8DW (01440 786599); Joint Outings Coordinators, Sheila Bricknell (01799 219078) and Mary Woolhouse (01799 530155); Representing Dunmow members, Val McGregor (01371 870296); Membership & Welfare Officer, Janet Crofts (01223 893619); Fundraising Officer, Kate Riley (01799 530350); Speaker organiser: Pat Lodge (01799 500255); Newsletter editor, Paul Chinnock (01799 522570).