

215 Vauxhall Bridge Road, London SW1V 1EJ, Tel: 020 7931 8080
Helpline: 0808 800 0303, Fax: 020 7233 9908, www.parkinsons.org.uk

UTTLESFORD SUPPORT GROUP
NEWSLETTER/INFORMATION SHEET, August/September 2017 2017
Website: www.parkinsonsuttleford.org.uk

We urgently need your help

Your Committee, which runs the Uttlesford Support Group is gradually falling by the wayside. Unless we have new Committee Members and support there is a real risk that the Group will have to close.

We particularly need help in the following areas:

- **Booking and organising speakers for the meetings**
 - **Preparing and sending out this newsletter**
 - **Organising our twice-yearly street collections**
 - **Updating the membership lists and mailing lists**
- **Attending our committee meetings (every 4/6 weeks)**
 - **A new Chairperson**

If you can help with any of these jobs, or in any other way, or know of anyone else who might be able to help, even if they are not currently a member, please contact Vivian Falk on 01799 513128 (vivian@brackendalehouse.co.uk) as soon as possible.

MEETINGS, AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 2017

Our meetings in **Saffron Walden** will take place on **Wednesday 9th August** and **Wednesday 13th September**. On 9th August, Oliver Hill from Collective Legal Solutions will give us a talk entitled "Tax, Care and Toy Boys", which sounds very entertaining, whilst in September we will learn from Christine Shaw about the History of John Lewis. I have heard her speak on this subject before and I can promise you that it is fascinating. Do please try to attend to support our speakers. We will be having our usual lunchtime meetings at **Banks Court in Dunmow on Wednesday 16th August** and **Wednesday 20th September**; please bring your sandwiches and join us for a cup of tea and a supportive chat. Members of both groups are always welcome to attend all the meetings wherever they are held.

OUTINGS FOR 2017

We would like to extend a huge thank you to Sheila Bricknell and Mary Woolhouse for organising our two very successful outings to The National Horseracing Museum at Newmarket and Anglesey Abbey. I believe these were greatly enjoyed by all those who attended.

CHRISTMAS LUNCH

Just to remind you that our Christmas Lunch this year will be held on Wednesday 13th December at Saffron Walden Golf Club. Please put the date in your diaries; more information to follow.

SCIENCE COLUMN

Could Parkinson's disease be an autoimmune disorder?

Could Parkinson's disease be an autoimmune disorder? A recent study from Columbia University revealed a possible link between the immune system — the body's defense system against disease — and alpha-synuclein, the sticky protein that clumps in the cells of people with Parkinson's disease (PD). Michael J. Fox Foundation (MJFF)-funded researchers [published in the scientific journal *Nature*](#) that molecular structures derived from alpha-synuclein are recognised by the immune system in people with PD, which could produce an autoimmune response and harm cells. The investigators, led by David Sulzer, PhD, will next test whether blocking the autoimmune response could impact Parkinson's progression.

This latest study led by CUMC and researchers from the La Jolla Institute for Allergy and Immunology in California has shown a normally soluble protein that aggregates in the substantia-nigra's cells called alpha-synuclein can trigger the body's immune system. The study took blood samples from 67 volunteers with Parkinson's disease and 36 controls, and mixed them with proteins found in nerve cells, including alpha-synuclein. While there was little reaction in the samples taken from the control subjects, there was a clear immune response in those with Parkinson's, indicating that the white blood cells in their immune system had previously been exposed to the proteins.

"Our findings show that two fragments of alpha-synuclein, a protein that accumulates in the brain cells of people with Parkinson's, can activate the T cells involved in autoimmune attacks," said Sulzer.

These findings build on growing evidence supporting a role of the immune system in PD. Studies have found activated immune system markers in the brains of those with Parkinson's. Other research has associated Parkinson's with variants in genes tied to the immune system, and Dr. Sulzer and his colleagues previously identified a link between these genes and alpha-synuclein function in models of Parkinson's.

[Another recent study](#), also funded in part by MJFF, revealed an association between the immune system and the LRRK2 protein. Mutations in the LRRK2 gene are linked to Parkinson's.

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 Uttlesford Support Group.*

August 2017 dates

Wednesday 9th August 2 – 4 Support Group Meeting, Garden Room, Jubilee Gardens, Saffron Walden

Wednesday 16th August 12 – 2 pm Lunch Meeting at Banks Court, Dunmow. Please bring your own lunch; tea and coffee provided.

September 2017 dates

Wednesday 13th September 2 – 4 pm Support Group Meeting, Garden Room, Jubilee Gardens, Saffron Walden

Wednesday 20th September 12 – 2 pm Lunch Meeting at Banks Court, Dunmow. Please bring your own lunch; tea and coffee provided.

At each of these meetings there is a small raffle to cover costs. We encourage members to bring a prize costing not more than about £1

TRANSPORT: If you wish to attend a lunch 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 : Vivian Falk, Chairman, 01799 513128, Judy Millward, Secretary, 01763 838742, Donations to Tony Leek, Treasurer, Richmond House, Mount Pleasant, Hundon, CO10 8DW, (01440 786599), Sheila Bricknell Joint Outings Co-ordinator (01799 219078) Janet Crofts, Membership and Welfare Officer (01223 893619), Mary Woolhouse Joint Outings Co-ordinator (01799 530155), Gordon Smith (01799 526339) Val McGregor, representing the Dunmow Group (01371 870296)

