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UTTLESFORD SUPPORT GROUP
NEWSLETTER/INFORMATION SHEET, December 2018 – January 2019
www.parkinsonsuttlesford.org.uk



A MESSAGE FROM OUR LOCAL ADVISER

Carol Jacobs is the Parkinson's UK Local Adviser (formerly Information and Support Worker) for Essex. She has written to us describing the support she can provide. We hope to have Carol come along to one of our monthly meetings soon.

"I am the Parkinson's Local Adviser covering your area, Uttlesford. My role is to provide support to people with Parkinson's and their families and carers. I can support you to fill in a form, give general benefit information and provide information about Parkinson's and support for carers. Most important though is that I am available to offer emotional support for carers and people with Parkinson's. Having someone to speak to especially if you are newly diagnosed can often really help. You could be struggling in your caring role and talking to someone about it can make all the difference. If you would like to make contact with me then please ring me on 0344 225 3778 or email me cjacobs@parkinsons.org.uk and we can have a chat."

FUTURE MEETINGS

-  Wednesday 12th December: the *Christmas Lunch* will be happening at the Saffron Walden Golf Club, 12.30 for 1.00pm. Forty-eight people have booked to come to what promises to be a first-rate seasonal event.
- Wednesday 9th January 2019, Jubilee Gardens, Saffron Walden 2–4pm: *social gathering* – a chance to swap tales about our Christmases, plus a short presentation by Pat Lodge about the Uttlesford Time Bank (a register that puts volunteers in touch with local people and organisations that need their help).
- Wednesday 13th February 2019, Jubilee Gardens, Saffron Walden 2–4pm: Nicola McQueen, specialist *Parkinson's disease nurse* at Addenbrookes, will speak to the group.
- Saffron Walden meetings continue at the Jubilee Gardens every second Wednesday in each month. We plan to have presentations including 'What it's like to be mayor' and 'Carrying the Olympic torch', plus speakers from Parkinson's UK. More details in the next newsletter.
- Great Dunmow *lunch meetings* as usual: third Wednesday every month, Banks Court, 12am–2pm.

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

LOCAL NEWS

- Following recent group discussions about the benefits of exercise (plus the presentation from Paul Goddard and items in this newsletter) we are in the process of starting a regular class for members which we anticipate will be at the Saffron Walden, Jubilee Gardens. Further details will be available soon.
- The Uttlesford Support Group is also grateful to have received some generous donations from friends and family of members who have recently died.

OTHER NEWS

Dancing is one form of exercise that seems to be particularly beneficial to people with Parkinson's. Research suggests that dance classes can help people with the condition to tackle everyday domestic tasks more effectively. The *Guardian* reports that: 'There is a growing appetite for dance among the 145,000 people in the UK with Parkinson's... Three years ago, the [Dance for Parkinson's Partnership](#) listed 20 UK classes but now there are about 70'. The nearest of these classes to Uttlesford is held at the village hall in Harston (Cambridge CB22 7PX);

contact: greenjanet69@gmail.com. [The Guardian article](#) is worth reading; as with all of the blue coloured 'links' here, readers who receive the newsletter electronically can click to read more.

RESEARCH ROUND-UP

As ever, there is so much new Parkinson's research being published in the medical journals that it is impossible to try to sum them all up, or even to identify the main issues emerging. However, here are a few things that have caught your Editor's eye in recent weeks.

- [Scientists in the US](#) have noted that people who have their *appendixes* removed when they are young are much less likely to get Parkinson's later on. (If they do develop the condition, they do so at a later than average age). They also found that the appendix is a reservoir for abnormal proteins (alpha-synuclein) known to be linked to Parkinson's, which just might be a clue as to how the disease first starts to develop, though why the proteins should spread from the gut to the brain in some people but not others is not at all clear.
- [A research team in Dundee](#) has worked with mice to identify two genes that are involved in protecting the brain from stress. They have gone on to show the presence of defective versions of these genes in some people with early-onset Parkinson's. Further research is needed but it may be that a *genetic defect* could lie behind some cases.
- [A company in Dublin](#) (United Neuroscience) has announced that it is starting work on a potential *vaccine* against Parkinson's. Results at 'test-tube' level have already shown that the vaccine prevents clumps of alpha-synuclein gathering around nerve cells. Other companies are also investigating similar approaches.
- [At Queen Mary University](#), London researchers have looked further into suggestions that *smoking* might reduce the risk of getting Parkinson's. They looked at data from over 220,000 people in eight countries (including 715 cases of Parkinson's disease) and concluded that something in cigarette smoke really does seem to exert a protective effect. If it could be determined what this actually is then it could conceivably be the basis of a cure. However, in the meantime no one should smoke to reduce their Parkinson's risk; tobacco increases the risk of so many other serious conditions that it should definitely be avoided!

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 the 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: 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).

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