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UTTLESFORD SUPPORT GROUP
NEWSLETTER/INFORMATION SHEET, June–July 2019
www.parkinsonsuttlesford.org.uk

LOCAL NEWS

- We held our annual Saffron Walden street collection on Saturday 13th April and raised £856.45, which we think was a good total on what was a very quiet and *very cold* day. Thanks are due to Kate Riley for organising the collection and to all the many people who helped.
- We have recently received generous memorial bequests including those in the names of William Dale and David Westcott.

UPCOMING EVENTS

- **Annual Garden Party:** we are delighted that Vivian Falk will once again be hosting the Garden Party which will be on Tuesday 18th June at Brackendale House, Saffron Walden, from 2.00 pm to 4.00 pm.
- The **Annual Outing** is to the Botanic Gardens in Cambridge on Wednesday 10th July. Arrival time will be 11.00, and a one-and-a-half hour tour (with three guides) will begin at 11.30. Scooters are available but must be hired in advance – contact Sheila Bricknell (details at the end of this newsletter). Lunch in the cafe will follow, for which the charge will be £7 per head. In order to have reserved seating, we all have to eat the same – a selection of baguette slices – but there is a choice of drink. Sheila will be in touch with further details and to ask your preference. All money will be collected on the day. Entry and tour will be free to members (£5 to non-members).
- Our usual meetings in the Jubilee Gardens, Saffron Walden will not take place in June or July but after that they will resume as normal on the *second* Wednesday in each month. We are hoping to bring you a range of interesting speakers!
- The monthly Great Dunmow lunch meetings will also not take place in June or July but will then resume every *third* Wednesday, Banks Court, Noon–2pm.

WORKING TOGETHER

Kate Riley and Janet Crofts recently represented the Uttlesford Group at a Parkinson's UK's '*Working Together*' workshop in Newmarket. These meetings are an annual opportunity for members from all local groups to share and swap ideas and information to help each other. Amongst the initiatives discussed were a national campaign to alert hospitals to the need for medication to be given *on time*; this may be followed by similar action in care homes. The Peterborough Group has developed a box and a wash-bag with the essentials a Parkinson's patient needs to have when being admitted to hospital. Other groups have been trying out a range of activities that people with Parkinson's have found helpful including: singing, outings of various kinds, ten-pin bowling and *Qigong* (a Chinese system of exercises, breathing and meditation).

The meeting also heard more about Parkinson's UK's re-launch of its membership as 'Team Parkinson's', with all members receiving a 'Toolkit'. The main goal is to widen membership to include everyone with any connection, not simply Parkinson's sufferers. Interestingly, there are around 145,000 people with Parkinson's in the UK but currently there are only 35,000 members.

PARKINSON'S RESEARCH IN THE NEWS

Parkinson's UK members will already have received the latest issue of the annual research magazine, *Progress*. Please do make sure you take a look at it. There really is a lot going on! Other research published in the last few weeks includes the following.

- The US Food & Drugs Administration has approved a new device ('PMCA') which is claimed to be able to diagnose Parkinson's at a much earlier stage, by detecting the bio-marker alpha-synuclein in the cerebrospinal fluid and blood, prior to the onset of clinical symptoms. [Details here.](#)
- Chrysin, a chemical commonly found in plants, may hold the potential to ease behavioural, cognitive, and neurochemical changes in Parkinson's disease, according to a mouse study. [Details.](#)
- Tiny channels between nerve cells may be involved in how Parkinson's spreads through the brain, according to new research from Sweden. The results suggest that harmful protein deposits, can bind and 'hitch a lift' with channel-forming proteins, and in this way spread to healthy cells. [Details.](#)
- A US study adds further evidence supporting claims that people who have had their appendix removed face a higher risk of developing Parkinson's than the rest of the population. [Details.](#)

EXERCISE: One member's story

Simon Russell writes....

For my birthday last year my wife and daughters gave me a 'Fitbit' activity device, on the basis that exercise and fitness is good for everyone. In a very short time I was doing the recommended 10,000 paces (about five miles) a day. Then, on attending my first Uttlesford Group meeting, I learned about fitness instructor Paul Goddard's special classes for people with Parkinson's. For the next two months I attended his weekly one-hour exercise sessions whilst continuing with my 'Fitbit' walking.

Soon I became a fitness addict! I consulted my doctor who gave me a referral letter to a local gym. This gave me full membership at a reduced fee and I now attend for a minimum of four days a week, doing a combination of cardio and weight resistance exercises for about 90 minutes each time. I follow the pattern of exercises as taught by Paul Goddard.

How has all this helped? I have lost weight (about 28lbs), my stamina and strength have improved and my body shape has also changed. The big question is, 'has the exercise slowed the development of my Parkinson's symptoms?' The answer is 'nobody can tell'. All I know is that I feel a lot better than last year and I do not believe my symptoms have advanced significantly. Most important – I enjoy it. I shall definitely continue with my exercise!

If you have found an activity that helps you manage your condition, then please do write a few words about it for the newsletter.

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. Your opinions on other matters are also welcome. For example, what is your reaction to Parkinson's UK's re-launch of membership as 'Team Parkinson' with its accompanying 'Toolkit'? Do you think this will help the organisation towards achieving its aims?

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).