

UTTLESFORD SUPPORT GROUP
NEWSLETTER/INFORMATION SHEET June–July 2021
www.parkinsonsuttlesford.org.uk

YOUR LOCAL GROUP: WE'RE GETTING THERE!

The committee of the Parkinson's UK Uttlesford Group has had its first in-person meeting since the pandemic began. We had met once on Zoom, we were very pleased to see each other again in person.

We discussed a number of matters but perhaps the most exciting was that we agreed that the annual garden party *will* take place this year – see below. Current Covid rules still prevent us from having any indoor meetings, but if the government's timetable (roadmap) goes according to plan then within a few weeks we hope to restart other events, including our monthly meetings in the Garden Rooms, Saffron Walden.

Our group was previously able to organise a special programme for members in the Great Dunmow area, thanks to the hard work of Val McGregor. For the moment, however, we will not be able to have any Dunmow meetings. We hope it will be possible to reinstate them sometime in the future. Dunmow members are always, of course, welcome at Saffron Walden meetings.

During the last few troubled months, we have sadly lost a number of members including Ken Kay and Jim White, neighbours and regular attendees at Saffron Walden meetings. We send our condolences to their wives and families. Meanwhile, more people in this district will have received a Parkinson's diagnosis but have not as yet joined our group. Do you know anyone in this position? Please ask them to get in touch.

We have not been able to do any fund raising in the last two years but have been fortunate in receiving a number of bequests and we will be able to donate to research in the coming months.

We are hoping to update our website (see address at the top of the page). Do visit it for recent news and information. Please also note that for the moment...

...if anyone needs advice on Parkinson's or related issues, they should not contact local advisers but contact Head Office on 0808 800303 and they will be given a contact who will guide them.

GARDEN PARTY

We are delighted to be able to tell everyone that the annual garden party will go ahead this year! Once again we are very grateful to Vivian Falk, who will be hosting this always popular event in her wonderful garden.

The party will be held on Wednesday 21st July, at 2.30-4.30, Brackendale House, Saffron Walden, Essex CB11 4AB.

It will of course be subject to any new government regulations that might be introduced before that time.

Garden party venue – pictured two years ago.



NATIONAL NEWS

- NHS neurology services for people with Parkinson's and other conditions have been restricted during the current pandemic. However, their resumption has been discussed in a [debate in the House of Lords](#). Parkinson's UK regularly updates the page of its website dealing with the implications of the coronavirus pandemic for people with Parkinson's. Do consult it for [up-to-date advice](#).

- [An article](#) by the BBC's technology correspondent Rory Cellan-Jones, who was diagnosed with Parkinson's in 2019, describes his experience using a wearable device that monitors his condition. He is doing this as part of a trial run by Imperial College, which seeks to make treatment more personalised by keeping a continuous record of each patient's limbs stiffness, tremor and slowness of movement.

RESEARCH

- Could air pollution be a factor in the development of Parkinson's? [A large study in South Korea](#) suggests it might. Based on information available on nearly 80,000 people living in Seoul over eight years, researchers found that the level of exposure to the pollutant nitrogen dioxide was strongly associated with the incidence of the condition.
- A joint British-Swedish [study](#) part-funded by Parkinson's UK has shed a new light on how the production of a key protein (tau) in the brain is controlled. If ways could be found to regulate the production of the protein, then it could pave the way for new treatments for a wide range of neurological conditions.
- Studies of the benefits of exercise for people with Parkinson's are numerous, but there is not much data available specifically on the impact of moderate aerobic exercise. [A Chinese research](#) team searched for and analysed published information on this point and concluded: "On the whole, moderate aerobic exercise effectively improves balance and gait in patients with PD, but the effect on motor symptoms is not obvious. Different exercise styles have varying effects on the quality of life of PD patients".
- Nordic walking has been proposed as being of particular benefit to people with Parkinson's. [Italian researchers](#) say they have indeed found improvements in such factors as balance, anxiety and quality of life in patients who took up Nordic walking for two months. However, the same level of improvement was also noted in a control group who were given a programme of standard walking activities.
- Do people who develop Parkinson's have a particular sort of personality? It has been suggested, for example, that they are introverted, depressed and obsessional. [French researchers](#) used a questionnaire known as the "Temperament and Character Inventory" to assess aspects of patients' personalities as their physical condition progressed. They also compared the patients with a group of people without Parkinson's. They concluded that when their condition first appears Parkinson's patients are *not* appreciably different from other people, but as their physical symptoms worsen they do indeed score more highly on the inventory for such attributes as 'novelty seeking', 'persistence' and 'self-directedness'.

TALKING POINT

What do you think when the media announces that a celebrity has been diagnosed with Parkinson's disease, as for example with [Jeremy Paxman's recent diagnosis](#)? A wealthy, well-connected celebrity is better placed to cope with a debilitating disease than other people, so why do they get all the attention? Or is it helpful to discuss their diagnosis as a way of highlighting the fact that anyone can get Parkinson's, and that we need more research and support for people with the condition?

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

PARKINSON'S NURSE COVERING UTTLESFORD: Vivienne Kavanagh 01279 621924 or 07778 934669. Viv does not offer clinic sessions, but she is available to give advice over the phone.

LOCAL ADVISER: Angela Nullmeyers. But at present you should contact the national helpline on 0800 8000303.

*UTTLESFORD COMMITTEE: Chair, Simon Russell (01799 524638); Secretary, Judy Millward (01763 838742); Treasurer (**Donations**), Tony Leek, Richmond House, Mount Pleasant, Hundon, CO10 8DW (01440 786599); Joint Outings Coordinators, Mary Woolhouse (01799 530155) and Vivian Falk (01799 513138); 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).*