

**GUILDFORD AND SOUTH SURREY BRANCH  
OF PARKINSON'S UK**

**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING  
Held on 23 February 2021 by zoom**

**MINUTES**

- 1. Attendance.** 35 Members and Carers were present.
- 2. No apologies** had been received by the Chair.
3. The Meeting was opened by the Chair, Niki Tompkinson who also welcomed Kieran O'Driscoll, Network Support Officer, Parkinson's UK.
- 4. The Minutes** of the previous AGM held on 25 February 2020 (published in *The Park*) were approved.

**5. Report of the Committee for Year 2020: Chair, Niki Tompkinson**

The contrast between the AGM in February 2020 and the virtual AGM of February 2021 could not be more dramatic; within months all social activities were suspended with the usual Members' meetings, the Summer Cream Tea, and the annual Christmas lunch all *cancelled*. However by the summer the Branch had resumed monthly meetings on Zoom – thanks to the remarkable efforts of Members to get themselves technologically equipped to participate – and even more remarkable, a virtual *Christmas Concert*, masterminded by Emily Bollon with *Parkinson Voices*, provided the highlight of the year in December. The various exercise classes had also kept going: some members actually found the provision of classes on-line preferable to having to travel to a class venue.

Virtual *Carers' Groups* also worked well, providing carers a bit of much-needed support during the difficult periods of lockdown.

Three editions of **The Park** were published and distributed during the

year and a conscious effort was made to keep the website up-to-date and to maintain contact with the members through e-mail messaging.

The Committee had met regularly throughout the year to keep things going, but the two members who left last year have yet to be replaced. The Chair encouraged anyone with a little time to offer to come forward, to share ideas and give support to the Branch. It was hoped that as restrictions ease there will be scope to move back to in-person meetings and to revive the social calendar.

As promised this time last year, money has been set aside to fund more substantial periods of respite care, and the Branch plans for giving more support to those newly-diagnosed with Parkinson's have already been put in place. However as the Treasurer would report, the days when we could draw down from the *magic money tree* (the Florence Pite Legacy) were coming to a close and now there was an urgent need for a volunteer to co-ordinate fundraising for 2021- 2022.

*The full text of the Chair's Report is filed with the Minutes and posted on the website.*

#### **5. Treasurer's Report for the Financial year ended December 2020.**

Mr Steve Heron presented a comprehensive financial report illustrated with clear diagrams that spoke louder than words. He stressed that the currently strong financial position was the result of the draw-down of the final tranche of the Florence Pite Legacy. If the current level of Branch activity is to be maintained, fundraising needs to ramp up for 2022.

*The full text of his report is filed with the Minutes and posted on the website.*

At the invitation of the Chair, Valerie Box spoke from the floor with animation and enthusiasm. *Little amounts can add up to a lot a lot* was her mantra : fund-raising did not have to be on a large scale or dramatic. She gave many examples of small scale fund-raising events that could be undertaken by people of all ages and conditions - including children. Valerie Box invited anyone interested in joining her in fundraising to

contact her via [valeriebox@outlook.com](mailto:valeriebox@outlook.com) or 07884235828

It was noted that the *Three Peaks Walk* in Surrey planned for April 2021 had already collected £860 in sponsorship. Members' fundraising suggestions included setting up a *ONE HUNDRED CLUB*; members would commit to a monthly donation in return for *a number*. The aim would be to recruit 100 members. The *numbers* would be tumbled each month and three drawn at random to receive prize money. It was a simple idea – all it needed was a Volunteer to make it work. *Open gardens* with bring-and-buy plant sales was another possibility; however it was noted that this should be made known by *personal* invitation – a public event could involve public liability/insurance issues.

## **6. Election of the Committee 2021-2022**

In accordance with Committee practice, Kieran O'Driscoll (PUK) took over the meeting and Niki Tompkinson vacated the Chair. Nominations for the Officers were called for, each to be proposed and seconded by a Member. The vote was by show of hands.

The result of the Election was as follows:

**Chair: Niki Tompkinson** (prop. Judith Turner and 2<sup>nd</sup> by Valerie Box) carried *nem.con.*

**Vice Chair : Hilary Austin** (prop. by Myra Newnes-Smith and 2<sup>nd</sup> by Nicholas Hetherington) carried *nem. con.*

**Hon. Treasurer: Steve Heron** (prop. by John Oldham and 2<sup>nd</sup> by Anne Folkes) carried *nem.con.*

**Hon. Secretary: Sharyn Bullen** (prop. by Hilary Austin and 2<sup>nd</sup> by Niki Tompkinson) carried *nem con.*

**Hon. Membership Secretary: John Oldham** (prop. by Steve Heron and 2<sup>nd</sup> by Myra Newnes-Smith) carried *nem con.*

The other Members of the Committee were all willing and eligible to serve. The proposal that **Dr Anne Folkes, Myra Newnes-Smith** and **Margaret Westwood** be nominated and elected *en bloc* (prop.by Valerie Box 2<sup>nd</sup> Nicholas Hetherington) was agreed.

All were duly elected *unopposed*.

## **7. Update on PUK by Kieran O'Driscoll**

It was noted that the 2020-2024 strategy outlined for Parkinson's UK had been derailed by Covid -19. Nevertheless the Charity had continued supporting key areas of research with substantial grants, establishing closer involvement with the NHS and community services, and addressing some of the issues and misunderstandings on the part of the general public about Parkinson's. Campaigning never stopped and some £1.3 million had been raised during the last year.

£1.1million has been committed to treatment for hallucinations. A further £1.3 million co-funded the Michael J Fox Foundation research into new drugs plus another £800,000 released for GDNF trials.

Kieran referred to the Surrey-Sussex Planning report published by Alastair Jack which looked into the perceived *gaps* in support provided by local Branches. Four workshops had been set up to address key issues, including better support for the *newly-diagnosed*, access to exercise and physical activities, and improved care and understanding of the needs of people with Parkinson's as patients in hospital. He invited members to come forward to contribute to these workshops in 2021.

A new CEO was being sought by PDUK and an announcement was expected later in the year.

**8. The meeting concluded** with a warm vote of thanks, voiced by Peter Barrows, for the supportive work of the Committee that had sustained the Branch in a very difficult year.

Margaret Westwood (Minutes Secretary) 5 March 2021