

Dear Member

Hope everyone is well, and enjoying some fine early Spring weather. Finally we are able to meet friends and families in our gardens! As we move slowly into the post-COVID era, here are a few points for you all to note for this month, and some things to think about for the future.

- **Communications Group/Speech and Language Therapy.** As you may recall from last month's update, we have been in touch with a Speech and Language Therapist, specialising in Parkinson's. In addition to her private 1-2-1 consultancy work, Celia runs monthly communications groups, sponsored by different Parkinson's Branches, for around 10 people. These are titled "Loud and Clear" and aim to help people with Parkinson's maintain/improve their communications skills. Celia is giving a talk and a "taster" session via Zoom on **Wednesday 7 April at 2pm**. Anyone is welcome to attend – names to me please at ntomkinson@guildfordparkinsons.org.uk and I will send you a Zoom invitation the previous day. If enough people are interested after the taster, there will then be three *free* monthly sessions for up to 10 participants from our Branch, each on the first Wednesday of the month i.e. **5 May, 2 June, 7 July at 2pm**. After that, a charge of £4 per person per session will be made.
- **NHS Speech and Language Therapy.** We are hoping that one of the NHS SLTs from the Royal Surrey Hospital Trust will be able to speak to one of our future members' meetings about what the NHS can provide for people with Parkinson's. In the meantime, you can ask your Parkinson's nurse for a referral, or contact the SLT unit direct on 01483 956472.
- **Carers group** - a small Zoom support group for those of you caring for someone with Parkinson's. Second Monday of each month – next one is **13 April at 2pm** when there will be a speaker from Surrey Action for Carers on "manual handling." If anyone wants to attend this, even if just as a "one-off", please contact Myra Newnes Smith on mnsmith@guildfordparkinsons.org.uk.
- **Members' Meetings** – last Tuesday of each month. Next one is **27 April at 2pm** and the speaker will be Gary Shaughnessy, Chair of Board of Trustees for Parkinson's UK. If you have not joined us before, please contact Sharyn Bullen on sbullen@guildfordparkinsons.org.uk
- **Newly diagnosed** – a monthly Zoom drop-in session on the last Wednesday of the month. Next one is on **31 March** and the following one on **28 April from 6pm-7pm**. New joiners to this group, please contact Sharyn Bullen on sbullen@guildfordparkinsons.org.uk
- **Dance for Parkinson's** – another new service as described last month. And another taster session on Zoom! This will take place on **Wednesday 28 April from 2pm-3pm**. Thereafter, if there is sufficient interest, there will be weekly sessions starting during the week beginning 24 May in (all being well) **The Borough Hall in Godalming**. These classes are run by a charity called Inclusive Intergenerational Dance, and are being funded this year by Waverley Council. If you are interested, please email Steve Heron on sheron@guildfordparkinsons.org.uk

- **Future Branch social meetings – in-person or stay on Zoom? WE NEED TO KNOW WHAT YOU THINK!** If everything goes according to plan, groups will be allowed to meet in person again from this summer. We could re-start the monthly meetings at Shalford Village Hall, which many of you may welcome, as it brings opportunities for personal interaction – not to mention tea and cake! But many of you have found that attending the Zoom meetings have brought entertainment and information to the comfort of your own home, albeit at the expense of being able to chat to each other in the margins. There are many options going forward – return to the monthly Shalford meetings? Stay with monthly Zoom sessions? Stay with regular Zoom meetings with occasional (quarterly?) in-person social events? As these meetings are for the benefit of you, our members, please tell us your thoughts! Emails to me please ntompkinson@guildfordparkinsons.org.uk
- **Provisional date for Christmas lunch – 7 December!** Further to the above, it is hard to imagine *not* meeting for Christmas lunch if we possibly can. We have made a provisional booking at the Guildford Rugby Club for 7 December.
- **Fundraising/100 Club.** Taking part in a monthly lottery is an easy (and maybe profitable!) way that YOU can help the Branch to raise funds for our many activities. Buy a number (or, better still, 5 or 10 numbers...) for £1 each per month and your number might be the lucky one out of the hat. Nick Hetherington has kindly agreed to coordinate this IF we get enough takers. We don't at the moment! Names to Steve Heron on sheron@guildfordparkinsons.org.uk.

That's quite enough for one month! Very best wishes to you all

Niki

Chair Guildford and South Surrey Branch, Parkinson's UK.