

This is my first email as Chair, having taken over from Niki Tompkinson at the AGM on 22nd February. For those who missed it, there was a range of emotions. There was 'pride' in the fact that we have such an active branch making a difference to those living with Parkinson's in our area. There was 'admiration' for the committee members who manage the branch's activities so professionally, whether that being a technical task like Finance or an emotional support task, like welcoming a new member. There was 'sadness' in thanking and saying goodbye to Niki and John who have left the legacy of a well-oiled machine – we wish them well in whatever they do now to keep themselves busy!

As Niki indicated, a new Chair brings a fresh set of eyes. I am still learning and at the start of the journey but I thought month by month I would tell you what I observe – you can come on the journey with me! So, what has made the biggest impact on me **Month number 1** - the generosity of the branch members – I have seen great kindness between members that have just met each other, I have seen the selfless acts of helpers that make the Tea or do the washing up or hand out the cake, I have seen honest conversations only possible in a supportive environment of friendship. In a world so filled with negativity, it is an honour to observe good deeds by good people. I hope in time to be able to offer my gratitude face-to-face but in the meantime, you know who you are and what you do, so I instruct you to give yourself 30 seconds to pat yourself on the back, feel great about your selfless giving and accept my remote gratitude!!

In terms of changes to processes and procedures, I don't see the need for major change simply tweaking. The first of these is that I plan to send members an email every 6 weeks rather than monthly. The logic is that we meet as a committee on a 6 weekly basis and accordingly we are best synchronised at this point. With the addition of Debbie Gaskell as Communications Coordinator, we plan to update the website on a regular basis – I recommend you take a look as it's much improved already! Additionally, with your support Keith Black (Membership Secretary) will be attempting to get up to date information about yourselves so we can ensure we scope the activity provisions correctly.

There are many people who want to be branch members but for whatever reason do not partake actively in the branch activities. I was one so fully understand the dynamics. You are most welcome to remain on the membership and I hope you enjoy hearing about our work. There are I believe a small number who would like to join in activities but who may be put off for some reason: this may be anything from a bad previous encounter or are put off by the location of activities or want to join but only if accompanied (it's often a big step to go as a newbie to an existing class where everyone knows each other). My final request is, if you are a member in the latter category, I'd love to re-welcome you into the Branch. Drop me a line at [dlowther@guildfordparkinsons.org.uk](mailto:dlowther@guildfordparkinsons.org.uk) and we can chat about what we can do to support you.

Finally, some updates and dates for your diary:

- **100 Club Update**- this has gone from strength to strength and we now have over 50 Branch members participating and almost 200 numbers in play each month! We have now increased the prize amounts to reflect this- 1st Prize is £60.00, 2nd Prize is £20.00 and 3rd Prize is £10.00. If you are interested in joining, please contact Nick Hetherington- [nhetherington@guildfordparkinsons.org.uk](mailto:nhetherington@guildfordparkinsons.org.uk)
- **Loud and Clear** online monthly speech maintenance classes- we currently have 2 spaces available on our subsidised first Monday in the month classes. If you are interested, please contact Steve Heron, our Treasurer- [sheron@guildfordparkinsons.org.uk](mailto:sheron@guildfordparkinsons.org.uk)
- **Parkinsong Voices** - We also have spaces on our weekly (Friday lunchtime) subsidised classes. If you are interested, please contact Steve Heron, our Treasurer- [sheron@guildfordparkinsons.org.uk](mailto:sheron@guildfordparkinsons.org.uk)
- **26 March** fundraising event- Guildford Chamber Choir are fundraising for the Branch at Guildford Holy Trinity Church Details at <https://www.guildfordchamberchoir.org.uk/events> .
- **26 March event** - 'Positively Parkinsons' Pirbright Arts Festival - will feature Dance for Parkinsons as well as Paul Mayhew-Archer performing his show Incurable Optimist plus more recent material.

- The BBC's Rory Cellan Jones has tweeted "if you live anywhere near Surrey - eg within 500 miles - do not miss this show."
- The Guildford branch is within ten miles of Pirbright so here's a great chance to see the man who manages to find the funny side of Parkinson's and cheer us all up.
- It's a charity performance in aid of Cure Parkinson's.
- For more information and to buy tickets go to <https://www.pirbrightarts.com>
- **21 May fundraising event-** Crispian Steele-Perkins Trumpet Concert at Barrow Hills School, Witley. Tickets £15 inc drink and light refreshments from [sheron@guildfordparkinsons.org.uk](mailto:sheron@guildfordparkinsons.org.uk). Offers of help to Valerie [valeriebox@outlook.com](mailto:valeriebox@outlook.com). Help needed to make some of the finger food refreshments and/or help lay out, serve and clear away. Valerie has received support from a number of helpers, but not enough, and nowhere near enough food for 200.
- **Summer Picnic-** We plan to hold another picnic this summer, and this time have a Plant Stall. For those of you who are green-fingered, could you plan to donate a few garden plants and perhaps even volunteer on the day to help run the stall. Please let our Treasurer, Steve Heron, know if you can donate plants/help - [sheron@guildfordparkinsons.org.uk](mailto:sheron@guildfordparkinsons.org.uk)

And last but not least, the latest copy of **The Park** is now available for your enjoyment.

Regards, David

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There is a lot more information available on the Website --  
<https://www.guildfordparkinsons.org.uk/> - Including electronic access to the latest edition of 'The Park' (Look for it under News 2022).

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