

Parkinson's UK - Guildford and South Surrey Branch

Chairman's Report for the 2023 AGM

Summary

Guildford and South Surrey remains one of the more active and effective Branches with a strong offering of subsidised physical and social activities. This report provides a brief summary of the activities that took place during 2022, with greater detail available on the website and within *The Park* magazine.

Membership numbers

Membership remained constant at around 380, with approximately a third of our members actively participating in the exercise and social activities that the Branch offers. With two-thirds of the membership not participating this might suggest we are missing the target, yet the evidence indicates that many individuals like to receive information but they are not yet ready to engage. During 2022 I received a number of motivational responses to my monthly emails from individuals who indicate that they get great support and reassurance from the various communications sent out even if they feel they are not ready yet to participate in, or no longer able to attend an activity, whether for physical or emotional reasons.

In addition to being flexible about who can join the membership list, the Committee feels that the location of a person's residence location should not be a blocking factor to accessing relevant support activities. In this spirit, one initiative that we kicked off in 2023, is to offer our subsidised activities to neighbouring branches of Parkinson's UK. We have yet to receive any requests so far but I feel this is just a matter of time and spreading the word.

Activities

We base our activities on the mantra:

Consultants advise people who have Parkinson's to:

- Stay **physically** active
- Stay **mentally** active
- Stay **socially** active

No significant changes were made during 2022 to the activities that the Branch provides. The existing group of suppliers have proven to be reliable, flexible and professional and accordingly we continue to work with them.

In terms of take-up of the activities, the number of members taking part in exercise classes provided by Foundation Physio and Surrey Hills Rehab has exceeded 100 on a weekly basis.

Numbers taking part in the Speech Therapy (Loud and Clear) and Breath Maintenance (Parkinsong) have reduced.

In terms of social activities, we continue to offer a Monthly afternoon social Meeting in Shalford, an evening Friendship Group monthly meeting and a monthly Newly Diagnosed meeting. Additionally, we continue to offer support for Carers

In addition to those meetings above, there are other social events in the calendar, including a summer picnic and a Christmas lunch.

I have no concerns over the range of activities we offer or the suppliers with whom we have contracts. As initiated in 2021, the Treasurer, the Membership Secretary and I will conduct an annual detailed mapping of members to activities to look for important trends

Communications

Considerable effort has been focused on improving communications. Typically, in our context, communication represents advertising the existence of the Branch and our offerings.

A number of initiatives were started in 2022 including the production of:

- Small business cards that can be given to interested individuals
- Branded Welcome and Thank You cards
- A4 and tri-fold leaflets promoting our branch and the activities we offer, for use in the wider community and in healthcare settings
- A4 posters and standalone banners for use during exercise activities and social gatherings that document the range of activities we offer.

During the year, we also started to build relationships with the healthcare professionals within the area. Meetings were held with the Parkinson Specialist Nurses and a Parkinson Consultant to ensure they have the necessary leaflets to give out on diagnosis

In addition to all the physical materials that have been produced we have also invested heavily in the website. This has been brought up to date and is now regularly updated. At the end of 2022 the whole website was transferred to a new platform and updated to incorporate modern development techniques.

Finally we aim to update the membership of key dates and significant news items through *The Park* magazine and monthly emails.

Fundraising

With the significant number of attendees at the various exercise activities supported by the generous subsidies we give, our expenditure is considerable (for details see the Treasurer's Report). To help replenish our funds in 2022 we ran a number of Fundraising events including but not limited to:

- An audience with Crispin Steele-Perkins
- Summer Picnic in the gardens of Clare Price's home
- Paul Mayhew-Archer one-man show
