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**UTTLESFORD SUPPORT GROUP
NEWSLETTER/INFORMATION SHEET
February - March 2024
Website: www.parkinsonsuttlesford.org.uk**

MEETINGS

In January, our monthly meeting was attended by Kate Watson, the Volunteer Support Officer from Parkinson's UK Eastern Region. She was able to give us some very useful information about what was going on at Parkinson's UK on a regional and national level, which was followed by a good discussion. Among other subjects discussed was the shortage of Parkinson's Nurses and she is going to give us information on how to lobby for more.

The dates and speakers for the next five meetings at the Community Hub, Jubilee Gardens, are as follows (all from 2 – 4pm):

13th February – Light-hearted quiz compiled by Steve Harmer

12th March – Talk about Uttlesford Community Travel, followed by a discussion on transport generally when living with Parkinson's.

9th April – The Rev Canon Chris Bishop, formerly Chaplain at Stansted Airport, will entertain us with music and anecdotes

15th May – Edward Gildea will give an illustrated talk about his mountaineering and sailing adventures all over the world, with special reference to climate change.

11th June, 2.30 – 4.30: Garden Party at Brackendale House, Debden Road, Saffron Walden

CHRISTMAS LUNCH

This was generally felt to have been highly successful and enjoyable yet again, and our thanks are due to the Golf Club for making us so welcome and to Mary Woolhouse and Kate Riley for organising it all. We have already booked the same venue this year for **Tuesday 17th December**, although, reluctantly, we are going to have to increase the cost to £18 per person.

FUND RAISING

Parkinson's Awareness Week falls in April and we have managed to book Saturday 13th April, in the middle of that week, for our annual street collection in Saffron Walden. Once again, Kate Riley will be looking for volunteers to rattle a tin outside Waitrose and in the Market Square for an hour or two that day. Any and all offers of help very gratefully received; please phone Kate on 01799 530350.

ACTIVE WITH PARKINSON'S (by member Nigel Franceschi)

Speaking as someone who would generally run a mile to avoid having to do exercise, if that is not an oxymoron, and who was always the last to be picked for any team sport activities at school, it may come as a surprise to those who know me well that I am actually enjoying and benefiting from a physical exercise class. Managed by Deb Liddington and run by Paul Goddard, who will be known to those of you who attend the PD class at Easton, the Sawston and Duxford Active with Parkinson's Group provide a range of activities to help people living with Parkinson's lead a healthier and more fulfilling life. Paul is a fully trained PD Warrior and Tai Chi coach, who is fully conversant with, and sympathetic towards, the many and varied needs of people living with PD. I have been going to Paul's PD Challenger class since September and, even on the days when I

really don't feel like it, I always end up leaving the class feeling better than I did when I walked in! For details of classes (including PD Challenger beginner, seated and advanced classes, Tai Chi and Nordic Walking), venues, prices and times, email Deb debliddington@btinternet.com. You won't regret it!

LATEST RESEARCH

Parkinson's Disease - Is Angiogenesis a Treatment and Potential Cure?

Zhittya Genesis Medicine is developing a drug, fibroblast growth factor 1 (FGF-1), to possibly treat Parkinson's disease by growing new blood vessels in the brains of individuals suffering from Parkinson's. FGF-1 is a potent stimulator of angiogenesis (the growth of new blood vessels) and is capable of growing these new blood vessels in ischemic areas of the body, including the brain. Research has indicated that a lack of blood perfusion to dopamine producing neurons located in the substantia nigra region of the brain lead to a lack of dopamine and the classic symptoms of Parkinson's.

In the past, FGF-1 has been able to grow new blood vessels in the human body. In a US FDA Phase IIA clinical trial, conducted at the University of Cincinnati, the drug was able to grow new blood vessels in the hearts of individuals with coronary artery disease, improving many of their symptoms.

FGF-1 has also shown excellent efficacy in treating Parkinson's disease in Cynomolgus monkey models. After being injected with a neurotoxin that selectively destroys dopamine-producing neurons, the two groups of monkeys came down with the classic symptoms of Parkinson's disease. After one group was administered FGF-1 and the other a placebo dose, the FGF-1 administered monkeys not only improved their motor scores almost to normal, but also increased their dopamine production and decreased their build up of alpha-synuclein plaque.

Beyond the monkey-model, Zhittya has begun medical research studies into the possible use of FGF-1 in humans suffering with Parkinson's disease. In June 2022, Zhittya conducted a safety study of intranasally administered FGF-1, which included Parkinson's sufferers. Beyond demonstrating that intranasally delivered FGF-1 was safe and well-tolerated by all in the safety study, it improved the motor skills of those suffering with Parkinson's disease. Zhittya conducted additional studies in Parkinson's in August 2022 and is looking to conduct future studies to determine if FGF-1 can improve symptoms of Parkinson's disease as it did for monkeys.

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Parkinson's UK membership *If you are not already a member, we do encourage you to join. Please ask for a form. There is currently no fixed fee to join and you do receive an excellent and informative quarterly magazine. We do, however, encourage you make a donation towards the running of the Uttlesford Support Group. A suggested figure would be £10 p.a.*

TRANSPORT: *If you wish to attend a meeting but can't do so because of transport problems – please contact a member of the committee; we will do all we can to find a way to get you there*
PARKINSON'S NURSE COVERING UTTLESFORD: *Vivienne Kavanagh 01279 621924*
Unfortunately Viv is currently unable to offer Clinic sessions, but she is available to give advice over the phone on Tuesdays, Wednesday and Thursdays. Her email is
epunft.westsexneuroteam@nhs.net.

LOCAL ADVISER *At present you should contact the national helpline on 0808 8000303*
UTTLESFORD COMMITTEE: *Interim Chair, Newsletter editor and Joint Outing Coordinator Vivian Falk (01799 513128); Secretary, Judy Millward, 01763 838742; Treasurer (& Donations) Tony Leek, Richmond House, Mount Pleasant, Hundon, CO10 8DW, (01440 786599); Joint Outings Co-ordinator, Mary Woolhouse (01799 530155), Fundraising Officer, Kate Riley, (01799 530350); Bridget Hardy (01799 550533), David Perks.*

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