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UTTLESFORD SUPPORT GROUP NEWSLETTER March 2025

Website: www.parkinsonsuttlesford.org.uk

APOLOGY

Firstly, may I wish all of you a very happy 2025, free from anxiety, tremor, stiffness, insomnia and shuffling. I shall pause there! Secondly, I must apologise for the lack of a February newsletter. Without going into too much detail, suffice to say that on Friday 24th January, I learnt four things:

1. When going upstairs, avoid carrying more than one item at the time;
2. Hold on to the banister at all times;
3. Even when in an ambulance, the journey from Stocking Pelham to The Lister Hospital in Stevenage is surprisingly long.
4. Lying on a hospital trolley in a hospital corridor with nothing to do but stare at the ceiling tiles above is not much fun.

Although I avoided breaking any bones, my body and my confidence were bruised for several weeks due to my fall backwards from the top of our staircase to the bottom. My intention that weekend had been to send out the newsletter for February/March but that had to be put on hold and now, with only four days of February left to go, we'll concentrate on March.

THANKS TO:

- * Mary Woolhouse and Kate Riley for masterminding the fabulous Christmas lunch.
- * Jon Fisher for talking to us at the January meeting about his invention to combat freezing and falling, and for his readiness to incorporate our suggestions in its design. Also for his single-minded determination in helping people with Parkinson's live more fulfilling lives.
- * Deb Liddington, the founder and co-ordinator of Active with Parkinson's Cambridgeshire, who attended our February meeting to talk about the benefits of attending weekly classes of Parkinson's focussed exercise. From eight initial

members when the classes started three years ago, there are now more than 100 participants attending classes led by Paul Goddard at three venues – Shelford, Stapleford and Newport. For further information, contact Deb on 07743 324288 or email her at info@awpc.org.uk.

- * Joanna and Claire from the East Anglia regional Parkinson's UK branch for attending the February meeting, talking to individual members about their concerns and queries.
- * Our committee members who turn up to every meeting to ensure that we have a productive and enjoyable time, serve tea and coffee and bake delicious cakes to share with everybody. The number of people living with Parkinson's and their partners/carers attending each month is growing and growing, which is testament to the efforts of the committee in inviting interesting and relevant speakers (and to the quality of Vivian's wonderful chocolate brownies!)

PARKINSON'S NURSE

Members will no doubt be aware by now that the former Parkinson's Nurse for the Uttlesford district, Viv Kavanagh, has resigned from her post and has been replaced at least temporarily by Julia and Nadine. However this will be extra to their usual workload and they will inevitably be overstretched. Any members who wish to make an appointment with a Parkinson's Nurse should phone the West Essex Parkinson's team at Latton Bush, Harlow on 01279 621924 and leave a message saying that you wish to speak to a Parkinson's Nurse, giving your full name and date of birth. There are clinics in Stansted Mountfitchet and Saffron Walden but there is currently an eight week wait for appointments. Kate Watson at Parkinson's UK has asked for any members who are experiencing difficulty in seeing a Parkinson's Nurse to inform Georgina, the local PUK Campaign Officer. We hope that Georgina will be attending one of our Spring monthly meetings.

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

Tuesday 11th March: Our very informal and entertaining Annual General Knowledge Table Quiz, ably organised by Steve Harmer. One of our Parkinson's Nurses will also be at the meeting. Usual venue: Community Link, Market Street, Saffron Walden.

NB: PLEASE BE AWARE THAT THE OWNERS OF THE PRIVATELY RUN PUBLIC ROSE & CROWN CAR PARK (BEHIND BOOTS) EMPLOY WARDENS WHO ISSUE FINES TO DRIVERS WHO LEAVE THEIR CAR FOR LONGER THAN THE PERMITTED TIME, EVEN BY 5 MINUTES. THIS INCLUDES 'BLUE BADGE' HOLDERS! (I speak from experience!!)

WORLD PARKINSON'S DAY ANNUAL STREET COLLECTION

April 11th is World Parkinson's Day and, to mark it, we will be holding our annual street collection in Saffron Walden on the following day, Saturday 12th April. The collection is masterminded by Kate Riley. Please check your availability and let Kate know at the March meeting or by phone if you are able to give an hour of your time to stand in Market

Square or outside Waitrose, holding a collection tin and encouraging passers-by politely to donate! If you'd like to team up with someone else, just let Kate know (01799 530350). We find that people are always keen to donate and find out more about what we do. Personally, I am always struck by the amount of people who know someone who has or had Parkinson's and the number who want to stand and chat about their experiences of the condition. It can be an extremely fulfilling and positive day.

SUMMER VISIT

Last July, we had a fascinating visit to the Shuttleworth Vehicle Collection at Old Warden, near Biggleswade, including lunch and a stroll around the beautiful Swiss Garden, organised by Kate Riley. If anyone has any ideas for our day out in July 2025, do please let us know. They need to be not too far away and fully accessible.

VOLUNTARY DONATIONS

There is no longer any charge for membership of Parkinson's UK. However, the charity is always very grateful for voluntary donations, as indeed is your branch. The raffle money from our Support Meetings pretty much pays for the hire of the rooms, but for anything else, e.g. our outings, the subsidised Christmas Lunch and, more importantly, the money we try to give annually to Parkinson's Research, we are dependent on funds from our annual street collection and any other sums of money that might come our way. If you feel you would like to make a voluntary donation towards any of this (and there is absolutely no pressure to do so), you may donate cash to a committee member at our monthly meeting or send a cheque to our Treasurer, Tony Leek, (address shown below). Alternatively, we shall be bringing a card machine to our meetings.

PARKINSON'S UK MEMBERSHIP

FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS: 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 receive an excellent and informative quarterly magazine. We do, however, encourage you to make a donation towards the running of the Uttlesford Support Group. A suggested figure would be £10 per annum.

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.

LOCAL PUK ADVISERS:

Joanna Aldridge (West Essex/Herts) Based in Saffron Walden. 0808 8000303.

Becky Linnell (Cambridgeshire). As well as being area adviser for Cambridgeshire, Becky is also available to help us with answers to questions we may have regarding eligibility for financial support such as PIP (Personal Independence Payment).

UTTLESFORD COMMITTEE :

Interim Chair: **Vivian Falk** (01799 513128) ;

Secretary: **Judy Millward** , (01763 83874);

Treasurer: **Tony Leek** , Richmond House, Mount Pleasant, Hundon, CO10 8DW, (07824 997748);

Joint Outings Co-ordinator: **Mary Woolhouse** (01799 530155) ;

Fundraising Officer & Joint Outings Co ordinator: **Kate Riley** (01799 530350) ;

Speaker Secretary: **Bridget Hardy** (01799 550533) ;

David Perks (07774 294954)

Nigel Franceschi : Newsletter Editor

(please send newsletter items to nigelsfranceschi@gmail.com).

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