

GOSPORT AND FAREHAM BRANCH OF THE MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS SOCIETY

*From the Secretary – Juliette Hewitt, 11 Beech Grove,
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Email graham@grahamhewitt7.wanadoo.co.uk APRIL 2013

Dear

I hope that by the time this newsletter reaches you those leaden grey skies will have lifted and there will be the first signs of better days ahead.

Firstly, I need to ask if you would prefer to receive the newsletter in e-mail format, which would save us postage costs. I know that some people like receiving post through the door and I am very happy to continue to send out hard copies.

However I do need to drag myself into the 21st Century! If you would prefer to receive newsletters by e-mail **please e-mail your e-mail** to the address at the top of this page.

Changing approach to providing support within the Branch - The Society nationally has decided that with the increasing demands on support volunteers the work has become more and more challenging, making it impossible for one person working alone.

Each Branch is required to have a team of on average 4 people undertaking the role. In this way a broader range of skills will become available and no single person will carry all the responsibility (and sometimes stress) encountered.

Apart from myself as the Lead Support Volunteer (sounds grander than it really is) I have been joined by:

Graham Hewitt – he is the one who is always on the end of the phone and picks up the e-mails. He has experience of employment law, advocacy and for many years was a member of the housing committee of Gosport Borough Council.

Julie Hawksworth – Julie is a trained psychiatric nurse and has a teenage daughter. She has had M.S. for several years. She would have difficulty visiting but her house is fully adapted for anyone who needs to make contact. Her phone number is 01329 510819.

Di Coggan - has teenage twins. and has been on a counseling course.

Both Julie and Di have had years of experience of living with M.S. and are still leading full lives.

We four are required to attend four training days a year. We have already attended our first, which we are all very enthusiastic about.

Appointment of second M.S. Specialist

In May Annabella will be joined by Simon who is an Occupational Therapist and will be working full-time.

However he has to go through several weeks of induction before he becomes available but once this is complete the support for people with M.S. and their families will be much strengthened and Annabella will have a chance to draw breath. Simon will be attending the AGM on June 1st to introduce himself.

Annual General Meeting

This year's AGM is to be held on Saturday 1st June at St Mary's Parish Centre, Green Road Alverstoke starting at 11.30am.

The AGM gives you a chance to see how our funds have been spent and to review our activities.

Enclosed with this newsletter is the nomination paper for officers and committee members, which will be decided at the AGM.

We very badly need some more committee members – so please give it some thought! You can nominate yourself and if you would like more information on what being a Committee member entails - please phone me.

Please return the form to me by the 24th May. A buffet lunch will be served after the business part is over. There will also be a presentation by Laura Duffy (M.S. Lead OT) on obtaining care packages.

Hill Head Chalet

Mave has booked the chalet for the following dates:-

Monday May 27 Wednesday June 26 Wednesday July 24 Wednesday Sept 4

The Wheelhouse Chalet is located in the car park at the end of Salterns Lane. We meet between 11.30am and 3pm. Coffee and soft drinks are provided. Bring a picnic if you wish otherwise we can send out for fish and chips. Do come and join us, it's a lovely spot on a sunny day and the chalet is cosy and well appointed even on a wet one.

For more details ring Mave on 02392 641124 or mobile 07789 511124.

Parking is good and the chalet has a disabled toilet.

Family Focus Day

The Hampshire and Islands region held a family fun day at Monkey World last September, which everyone enjoyed.

They are planning a similar event nearer to home on the 11th May this year. If you would like to register your interest please contact David Light on 0208 4380780 or e-mail dlight@mssociety.org.uk

Fund Raising - Store collections

Karen has organized collections at the following stores and would much appreciate your help, even if you can only spare an hour. Phone her on 01489 570450 or e-mail karenreeves1111@hotmail.co.uk

Saturday 18th May - Sainsbury Broadcut Fareham

Saturday 27th April – Tesco's Whiteley

Saturday 8th June – Tesco's Fareham

As I have said before you meet some very nice friendly people. The M.S. Society is well respected by the public.

Book-Stall – George has organized a book stall in Gosport Market on Tuesday 30th April. Do look out for us, there are some really good books for sale. Let's hope Gosport High Street is a little less draughty than it was last year.

Craft and Pamper Day – Karen has arranged another of the very popular Pamper Days for Saturday 20th April at Crofton Community Centre 11am – 4pm. Tickets are for sale for £1 with 15 minute treatment sessions at £5 a time. If you do not have a ticket already they will be for sale on the door. Refreshments and light lunches will be available.

Benefit Changes – We are anxious to know if any of you have been adversely affected by the changes being made to various welfare benefits.

One of our members is going to have to find an extra £54 a month because of the “bedroom tax”. I am sure she can't be the only one. All information would be treated in the strictest confidence.

The local Council has discretion on the imposition of the “Bedroom Tax” – Do Make an appeal through your local housing department.

The MS Society is good at providing good, accurate and easy to understand Information and the National Society has already published some excellent articles.

Do look at MS Matters, the MS website –(information can be downloaded) .

IN CONCLUSION

There is a diary of events included with this newsletter giving notice of our regular activities to which everyone is welcome.

These include the fortnightly physio and lunch, the yoga, craft sessions and coffee mornings at two local pubs.

I hope you find something of interest in the letter and look forward to meeting up.

Best Wishes

