No. 177 July 2011

Teamspirit

For branch officers and national support group committee members

Welcome to the July edition of Teamspirit.

Contents

Don't forget - the information in the first five sections is for **everyone**, wherever you are in the UK.

New email address for Teamspirit

We're always keen to hear your feedback, and have a new email for your comments and suggestions. Email ideas to **teamspirit@mssociety.org.uk**, phone 020 8438 0944 or write to Teamspirit, MS Society, 372 Edgware Road, London NW2 6ND.

If you're a newsletter editor, email teamspirit@mssociety.org.uk to receive a version of Teamspirit that you can copy and paste into your branch or regional newsletter.

Branch donations

Branch or group	Description	Earmarked funds	Research
Basingstoke & District			£411
Bedford			£2,000
Bradford & District			£70,000
Campbeltown & District			£3,000
Carmarthenshire	MS Register	£2,000	
Dereham & District			£3,000
Dundee	Cambridge Myelin Repair Centre	£10,000	
	Translational Research Centre	£10,000	
Ealing	Welfare	£2,500	£2,500
Falkirk			£5,000
Glasgow North & East	MS Nurses	£2,500	£2,500
Gravesend & District	Fairer Financial Assistance Fund	£500	
	Symptom Relief Fund	£1,000	
	Cambridge Myelin Repair Centre	£1,000	
Llandrindod Wells & District			£2,000
Sheppey			£2,000
Sittingbourne			£1,000
Skegness & District	MS Nurses	£400	
Tameside, Glossop & District			£40
Trafford	Symptom Relief Fund	£1,000	
Wakefield & District	Stem Cell Research	£1,000	
	Myelin Repair Centre phase 2	£1,000	
	Symptom Relief Fund	£1,000	
Wareham & Purbeck	MS Nurses	£2,000	
	Myelin Repair Centre phase 2	£2,000	
Winchester			£500
Totals		**£37,900**	**£93,951**

These are donations recorded in March and April 2011, except Scotland donations, which also include January and February 2011.

News and events

2011 Annual General Meeting

The 2011 MS Society of Great Britain and Northern Ireland Annual General Meeting (AGM) will take place on 10 September 2011.

All members of the MS Society are invited to attend the meeting, to be held at the Crowne Plaza, Heathrow. To book a place please call 020 8438 0941.

We are keen to make the AGM as accessible as possible and the meeting will be webcast live on our website. It will also be available for viewing following the close of the meeting.

The AGM is the opportunity for members to formally propose changes – by submitting resolutions that are debated and voted on by members. The Board of Trustees will be discussing proposed resolutions at their 21 July meeting. Please note the deadline for resolutions, 2 July, has now passed.

You must have been a paid member of the Society on or before 10 June 2011 to be entitled to vote at the AGM. Voting forms will be included in a pack that will be sent out in August, and you will also be able to vote online.

Before you vote, you are encouraged to ask questions of the proposers and responders. Instructions on how to do this will be included in your AGM advance mailing and on the 'About us' section of our website.

MS Week 2011 round up

Putting MS on the map
23 – 29 May 2011

MS Society in the news

MS Week coverage reached an audience of more than 10 million people, higher than all previous MS weeks to date.

Highlights included Sky News interviews played throughout the day on the Monday of MS Week, national broadcast interviews in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales and features on around 16 BBC English TV and regional radio stations.

MS Register

3,000 people signed up to the MS Register at **www.ukmsregister.org** during MS Week – and by 8 June almost 2,000 more had signed up.

Map MS

Our dedicated website **www.mapms.org.uk** has been a great success with people submitting films from Guernsey to Inverness – around 300 films have been recorded so far and the website had been viewed by 17,500 people at press date. Videos have been made by people with MS, their family and carers, as well as MS Society volunteers and staff, neurologists, nurses, doctors, MPs and celebrities.

News and events

Not made a film yet? Visit **www.mapms.org.uk** to upload yours, or ask a friend or relative to help you if you aren't online.

Roadshow

Our dedicated video booth stopped at nine locations across the UK over three weeks recording around 170 films – nearly double our target! Liverpool smashed all targets by recording 60 films in one day. A big, big thank you to all who volunteered at the events.

Aardman film

Our brilliant new animated film by Aardman director Darren Robbie was viewed 5,800 times in the first week on YouTube. We were the number 1 most viewed UK non-profit organisation on YouTube on Tuesday 24 May! Not seen the film yet? It's at www.youtube.co.uk/mssociety.

Receptions

Over 30 Parliamentarians and 33 major donors attended our event in London. One third of Northern Ireland's MLAs attended an event in Belfast (see page 25). Over 80 people attended an event in Scotland (see page 23).

What next?

MS Week may be over but it's not too late to:

- Tell everyone you know with MS about the MS Register. They can sign up at www.ukmsregister.org.
- Distribute posters and postcards (order them from the MS shop).
- Upload a film to www.mapms.org.uk.
- Forward on the animated film at www.youtube.co.uk/mssociety.

What did you do?

If you haven't yet sent back a checklist, please do fill in and send back the one on the next page so we can make MS Week even bigger and better next year.

Would you like to be involved in the planning for MS Week 2012? We'd like committee members to get involved so we can make MS Week as helpful and effective as possible for branches and support groups. Contact Bridget Moylan at comms@mssociety.org.uk or on 020 8438 0741.

MS Week checklist

What did you do to **put MS on the map** during MS Week? Your feedback will help us improve for next year, see which activities were most popular and get a better picture of who's putting MS on the map, and how.

Simply tick which activities you did, and add any comments you like. Then tear out and pop this page in the **post** to:
Communications Team, MS Society, 372 Edgware Road London NW2 6ND.
Or you can **email** your comments to comms@mssociety.org.uk.

Branch or support group:
Your name:
Your role:

Tick which activities you did and comment on how successful you think they were:

I signed up to the MS register

Encouraged friends and family who have MS to sign up to the register – how?

Went to the roadshow and filmed a clip – or filmed a clip at home and uploaded to the Map MS website

Hosted a Cake Break

Got supporters in your community to host a Cake Break

Shared info with your friends on Facebook

Followed us on Twitter

Put up posters in your community

Sent a letter or press release to your newspaper editor or local media – who did you send it to? Did anyone run the story?

Was there an article in your newsletter – did it include the MS Week crossword?

Wrote to your MP (did you use the online template?) or went to your MP’s surgery to talk about MS

Invited your MP to your branch or group meeting to meet people living with MS – did they come? How did it go?

Joined the Campaigns Network

Joined the Research Network

Anything else? Please let us know so we can suggest it to others for next year.

MS Society respite care centres – update

As you may have heard, initial agreements have been signed between the MS Society and two prospective new providers to transfer our respite care centres in England to new ownership.

MS Respite & Care Services Limited is the prospective provider for Helen Ley and Brambles. It is an associated company to St Cloud Care Plc, which has 18 years experience in providing nursing care.

The prospective provider for Woodlands is Christchurch Court, a company which specialises in residential and supported living for people with neurological conditions.

The two new providers have both committed to continuing to provide a service for people with MS at all three centres, and service commitments will be kept with long-term residents at Helen Ley Court.

A legal process called 'due diligence' is underway, with the aim of exchanging contracts in the near future. The process is like a house purchase – it takes time and it is hard to predict when exchange and completion will take place.

At the time of press this is the situation, but as things are changing week by week, please check our website for the latest updates. If you have any questions, please contact your local staff member.

How we describe what we do

Clearly these changes will affect what we say about what the MS Society does in due course.

Please take the opportunity to take stock of the wording on any leaflets you have and check if you mention respite care. This includes any leaflets you have on display in branch property.

You don't need to change anything immediately, but will need to produce new leaflets in due course if they mention respite care. For suggested alternative phrases, please see the 'News' section of Branchzone.

News and events

MS National Centre Open Day

Date for your diary

We are delighted to announce that MS National Centre in London will be holding an Open Day on **Tuesday 29 November** 2011 for MS Society volunteers.

The day is an opportunity for you to meet MS Society staff and volunteers, ask questions and discuss the issues that affect you.

MS National Centre will be fully open and there will be plenty of time for you to tour the building, talk to different staff teams based at MS National Centre and chat with other volunteers who attend.

The invitation is extended to all MS Society volunteers so please encourage those in your branch or group who may be interested in attending. Volunteers who are new in post should find the day particularly useful.

Further information about the day and how to book will be included in future editions of Teamspirit. In the meantime, if you have any questions please contact Liz Wigelsworth, Volunteering Officer on 020 8438 0749 or email lwigelsworth@mssociety.org.uk.

Travel expenses should be claimed from your branch or support group. If there are financial limitations, please contact Liz.

We look forward to seeing you on the day.

Involving your MP

Thank you

Thanks to all of you who wrote to your local MP asking them to attend our MS Week reception on May 18. More than 30 MPs and peers attended. Several MPs told us that they came along because a branch or constituent asked them to, so it really does make a difference!

A huge thanks also to everyone who came to the Hardest Hit march on 11 May, met with their MP or joined the online protest. The day was a huge success, with an estimated 8,000 people marching on Parliament.

A number of Parliamentarians have said that the march and protest have significantly increased their ability to influence the Welfare Reform Bill.

You can see pictures from the march on our Flickr pages at www.mssociety.org.uk/flickr.

What else you can do

Write to your MP now

Haven't taken part in Hardest Hit yet? The campaign isn't over! You can still take action by writing to your MP or arranging to meet them: visit **www.hardesthit.org.uk** to find out more.

News and events

Get involved in regional Hardest Hit events

We're also thinking of running further regional events as part of the campaign. Do you think this is a good idea? Would you like to help us run a campaign event in your area? Contact campaigns@mssociety.org.uk with your thoughts.

Ask your MP to visit our party conference stand

The Policy and Campaigns Team will have a stand at all three major party conferences this Autumn. We need your help to ask them to come and see us and commit to raising MS issues in parliament.

Nearer the time, we'll put a template email on our website so you can write to your MP and ask them to visit our stand on behalf of your branch.

Volunteer reviewers wanted

When we plan and write MS Society information publications, we depend on our volunteer reviewers – people with MS or people affected by MS – to tell us if it's useful and appropriate.

You don't need any specialist knowledge to be a volunteer reviewer – just some insight into how MS affects you. All you'll need to do is read our information, and tell us what you think.

What's involved?

- When we are planning, writing or updating information, we would contact you to ask if you want to review it for us
- If so, you'd then drop us a line or call to say you can
- We'd then send it to you, with a checklist for guidance
- We usually need comments back by email or post within two weeks.

So, if you're willing to share your opinions and experience with us, we'd like to hear from you.

How do I volunteer?

To sign up as a volunteer, or for more information, get in touch as follows:

phone: 020 8438 0799 (ask for the Publications Team)
email: infoteam@mssociety.org.uk
post: Publications Team
MS Society
372 Edgware Road
London
NW2 6ND

Calling all bloggers!

As *Teamspirit* went to press, we were just getting ready to launch our brand-new website – and we want to make the most of it. We're looking for talented writers who are willing to blog for us about their volunteering experience. Maybe you or your branch have achieved something fabulous or newsworthy.

Do you feel like your volunteering makes a difference? Why did you choose to become a volunteer? What's the best – and worst – thing about volunteering? Volunteers make the MS Society great – help us celebrate that by telling us your stories!

If you're interested in being a guest blogger for us, whether on a one-off or more regular basis, get in touch with Chloe at cgeorge@mssociety.org.uk for more details.

Volunteer website coming soon

We're currently working on the new website for volunteers that will replace Branchzone. A big thank you to those of you who helped us to prioritise what should go on it last autumn. There will be more information in September *Teamspirit*.

New titles/ editions from the MS Society

- *MS Essentials 15: Women's health* (Second edition, March 2011)

- *MS Essentials 03: Insurance and MS* (Sixth edition, April 2011)

Please recycle all old editions of these booklets.

If you would like copies of any of these titles, visit our online shop at **http://shop.mssociety.org.uk**. If you need a login for bulk orders please contact the Information Team (details below).

If you do not have internet access you can telephone the orderline on 0300 1000 801.

Also available to order now:

- The updated Personal details card
- Postcards and posters to 'Put MS on the map'

We also have a flyer (order ref LF11) promoting a new resource for GPs, the BMJ Masterclass: Evidence-based updates for GPs. You can pass this on to health professionals in your area to encourage them to order it. You can also order the book itself to pass on to them.

A similar flyer for people to pass on to their GPs will be in the next issue of *MS Matters*.

Sample copies of all publications mentioned on this page have been sent to all MS Society branch chairs and support officers/ volunteers, MS nurses, MS Information Points and Information Centres, MS Society respite care home managers, local MS Society staff (area managers, service development officers, local support development officers, volunteer development officers), trustees and regional chairs.

You can contact the Information Team by:
email: infoteam@mssociety.org.uk
phone: 020 8438 0799 (weekdays 9am-4pm).

Reaching out in Slough

Have you ever wanted to see more people at MS Society events from all communities in your local area?

As we all know, we aim to support everyone with MS – but volunteers and staff often talk of the struggle they can have to reach black and ethnic minority communities in their local area.

Maidenhead, Slough and District Branch, Thames Valley region and local staff decided to tackle this challenge in Slough. The result was a very successful information day on 14 May, which attracted people from many different communities in the town and surrounding area.

In the past, attendance at events like this amongst black and minority ethnic groups has been less than 10 per cent. In Slough, the event was fully booked and over 80% of attendees were from these groups.

There were several factors which contributed to the success of this day.

- The local PCT (NHS Primary Care Trust) supported the event, sending out personal invitations to people on their lists on behalf of the MS Society. The MS nurse sent invitations to patients specifically from black and ethnic minority groups.
- The event took place in Baylis House, a local venue popular for staging Asian weddings and as a result well known in Asian communities.
- High profile speakers such as Dr Omar Malik and Dr Sreeram Ramagopolan were invited and were able to talk about the development of MS in Asian as well as European populations.
- Food and refreshments catered for a multi-cultural audience.
- Branch volunteers worked hard to network amongst community groups and as a result people from different communities were known to them locally.
- Asian MS, one of the MS Society's national support groups, also supported the event and made it known to their members.

Many delegates commented kindly on the event afterwards, praising the speakers and the volunteers involved. One focused on the atmosphere of the event and commented:

"The most striking thing at this particular event was the hospitality and consideration. This ethos is probably taken for granted in Asian culture but as a recipient it was brilliant."

For more information contact Saher Usmani in the Volunteering Team at susmani@mssociety.org.uk (with the subject line 'Learning from Slough') or on 020 8438 0856.

Cake Break

Thank you to everyone who has supported Cake Break this year. We've had a fantastic response – so there are lots of people around the UK getting involved. There are a few things to remember about your Cake Break:

Sending your donations in

Check page seven of your host pack and follow the easy steps to send your donations in. Don't forget to include the donation slip if you want the funds earmarked for your branch.

If you receive Cake Break donations from your supporters

Please email cakebreak@mssociety.org.uk the amount of the donation you received. If you know the contact details of the donor, please email them to us too, so we can send a Cake Break thank you certificate and acknowledgement letter.

By returning your donations to MSNC or letting us know about money you receive you will help us find out how successful Cake Break is for our branches. Together we can make sure this was the best Cake Break ever!

For more about Cake Break please visit **www.mssociety.org.uk/cakebreak**, call Gulen Petty on 020 8438 0704 or email cakebreak@mssociety.org.uk. Readers in Scotland please see page 24.

Appeals update

You may have seen our appeal in March about research into childhood MS. We're delighted to report that over £90,000 has been raised so far. We hope to report back on the MS Week appeals about the MS Register in the next issue of *Teamspirit*.

Over the summer months, the marketing team at MS National Centre will send out *advances*, our twice-yearly supporter newsletter, as well as a letter telling people about legacies and how to request more information on this special way of supporting the Society. These mailings will include a number of members across England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

If you have any questions, please contact:

- Sarah Briggs in the direct marketing team at MS National Centre on sbriggs@mssociety.org.uk or 020 8438 0847
- Hazel Johnstone in the fundraising team in Scotland on hjohnstone@mssociety.org.uk or 0131 335 4071.

Christmas catalogue 2011

You can raise funds for your branch by encouraging members, family and friends to purchase cards and gifts from the MS Society Christmas collection. Each branch is allocated a unique 'media code' which gives you 25% commission every time a purchaser fills in this code.

Fundraising

Webb Ivory, our Christmas catalogue provider, has sent a letter to branch chairs and/ or treasurers outlining the process for 2011. The letter contains your code and also gives you an opportunity to buy bulk cards at a discount rate before the end of August.

If you haven't received this letter – don't worry. You can get a copy plus your media code on Branchzone.

Members will receive the catalogue with their July/ August *MS Matters*. Any members who have bought from the range in the past will also receive catalogues direct from Webb Ivory as the season progresses.

This duplication is deliberate – it is the marketing method that when tested produced the most orders for us and so raises the most money for you. Webb Ivory bear all costs for these mailings, including printing and dispatch. The MS Society receives commission on all sales through the collection, and incurs no direct costs.

If you have any questions or feedback, please contact Sarah Briggs in the marketing team on 020 8438 0847 or sbriggs@mssociety.org.uk.

Let's celebrate

Ask people to celebrate their special occasion with the MS Society. You can encourage supporters to host a party or ask for donations in lieu of presents, to celebrate their special occasion whilst raising money for people affected by MS.

The Fundraising Team can provide supporters with a free, easy to use 'party pack', which includes step by step fundraising guidelines, tips and promotional materials to help make every party a huge success!

For more information about raising money from special occasions please visit www.mssociety.org.uk/celebrate, call 0870 241 3565 or email celebrate@mssociety.org.uk.

Tesco collections

Results of the July – November 2011 collections along with application forms for the 2012 collections will be sent out shortly.

We are sending results to chairs only. Please see May *Teamspirit*, page 17, for information on why this is.

If you have any questions or queries please contact the community fundraising administrator at tesco@mssociety.org.uk or call 020 8438 0728.

Beano badges

Help spread the word that pin badges featuring Dennis the Menace (and five of his friends from the Beano comic) are available during July from branches of the Leeds Building Society in aid of the MS Society. So tell your friends, family and supporters – the metal retro badges make a great series to collect and keep.

Approval of expenditure

Please read and note what you need to do to get your expenses approved. These procedures are based on guidance from the Charity Commission.

All expenditure must be approved by the full committee, with some exceptions.

The exceptions are:

- **Petty expenses** can be approved by two committee members (ideally one being the treasurer) after expenses are incurred.
- Where the **grants sub-committee** has delegated authority from the branch committee to make awards to applicants. This enables the sub-committee to make quick awards to applicants and protects the privacy of each applicant.
- The committee must approve **expenditure over £10,000**, but final approval must be given by local staff or MS National Centre **before** the purchase can be made. Proposed purchases over £10,000 require a business plan to be submitted via local staff to National Centre before approval can be given – this also includes branches with excess reserves and branches who receive a legacy over £10,000.

For more detailed guidance about branch expenditure please see the *Treasurers' Handbook* sections 3.1 and 5.1-5.2 and the Financial Controls checklist in section 3.3.

If you are a treasurer and do not have a copy of the *Treasurers' Handbook*, you can download this from Branchzone or contact Sam/ Sherene for a copy at financesupport@mssociety.org.uk.

Business plan formats

Work will shortly get underway to review the business plan process and supporting tools; further information will appear in future editions of *Teamspirit*. If you would be interested in being involved in a volunteer reference group to support this work, please contact Stuart Hornsby at shornsby@msociety.org.uk or 020 8438 0977.

Mileage claim rate

Changes to HMRC guidelines now mean that from 6 April mileage expenses can be claimed at 45p per mile.

Any costs incurred before this date will be paid at the old rate of 40p per mile.

An updated expenses claim form is available on Branchzone.

Finance

MS Shop

shop.mssociety.org.uk

As mentioned in May *Teamspirit*, our online shop is proving very popular. If you made purchases from the MS shop between its launch and 31 December 2010, you will have noticed that the total costs for that period were charged to your Barclays cash pooling account in April 2011.

For details of these purchases, see the dispatch notes sent with your goods or contact Sam or Sherene at financesuppport@mssociety.org.uk.

Please note that future online purchases from the shop will be charged to your Barclays bank account approximately every quarter.

When placing an order from the shop remember that goods purchased fall into the category or either **fundraising and awareness** or **trading**.

The online shop has a note next to each item which states:

- fundraising and awareness: "This item is not for resale and should be given away for free to raise awareness. People can make a voluntary/suggested donation if they wish."
- trading: "This item is for resale only and not for free distribution."

These items are accounted for in different ways, and that is why we have these categories. There is more on this in section 8.11 of the *Treasurers' Handbook*.

Treasurers' Forums

We are pleased to announce that the Treasurers' Forum 2011 dates will be sent to branches soon.

Our feedback shows that forums are very popular with all members of the committee and so if you have an interest in learning more about branch finances and getting advice from our dedicated support team, do come along.

It's also a great way to make links with other branches and share ideas.

Booking forms and information should reach branch treasurers and chairs soon by post, and will be available by email on request.

If you are interested in attending please return your completed booking form as soon as possible to guarantee your place.

Please contact Sam Botten (020 8438 0709), Sherene Ross (020 8438 0785) or email us at financesupport@mssociety.org.uk with any queries about attending a forum.

Developing Local Counselling Services

by Tracey Cole, Service Development Officer, Lancashire, South Cumbria and Greater Manchester

Would you like to reach out to people affected by MS who would benefit from counselling?

For less than £50 per person per year, some branches in the North-West of England now offer confidential counselling services to support local people affected by MS.

It is thought that around 50% of people with MS experience clinical depression at some point.

But NHS counselling services vary from one region to another, and in some areas are not available at all. Hardly any cater for a person with MS or their family at the point of crisis, when immediate support is needed.

The model used in the North-West

The model is simple. A self- employed, fully qualified counsellor is contracted to provide the service using a service level agreement. One branch takes the lead, oversees the risk assessment process and administers the necessary finances.

The total cost per year for 4 hours of counselling a week is £2,460 (divided equally between two or three branches), making it for most a very affordable and achievable service.

The counsellors are paid at the same rate they would earn from the NHS. Clients are asked for a suggested donation of £5 per session, but those who cannot afford to pay are not turned away.

Sessions take place in non-NHS and non-branch premises such as Independent Living Centres – mostly free of charge. We believe the location has been a key factor in the success of the services. It takes away the stigma of travelling to a hospital or psychology department, and means there is no worry that members of the branch will see who is attending appointments.

Once the service is ready to start, all members in the area and surrounding districts are sent a booklet advertising the service. Copies are also sent to MS Nurses and other local health professionals, so they can pass them on to people who might like to use the service.

Anyone affected by MS can self-refer to the counsellor via a confidential e-mail or phone number, and there is no contact with the branches at any point in the process.

The branches receive monthly feedback to see where attendees are coming from and how many sessions they received, but no identifiable data is shared with the branch, to make sure confidentiality is maintained.

For England

The outcomes

During the first 12 months, the Trafford Counselling Service received 52 referrals from all areas of Manchester. The vast majority went on to receive a number of face-to-face counselling sessions to help them cope with the issues they were facing.

Comments from people who have used the Pendle and Burnley Counselling Service, joint funded by Blackburn Branch and Pendle and Burnley Branch, include:

"I just want to say a BIG THANK YOU !! I can't tell you how much the counselling helped me and will continue to do so. When I think about the things I've learnt about myself! It's amazing how just speaking to someone else can make such a difference"

"I did not know what counselling was all about, but it really helped to have someone really listen to me."

What can your branch do?

- Ask for local counselling services to be placed on your next committee meeting agenda, with the question: "Is this something that our branch would like to develop?"
- If yes – discuss it further with your Local Support Development Officer or Service Development Officer.
- They can provide copies of the service level agreement, booklet and flyer used in the North-West to help you get started.

Would you like help organising an event?

If you are considering organising a sponsored walk, run, wheel & walk, or any other fundraising event in your local area, then why not contact our Fundraising Manager?

Iestyn Evans can provide you with advice and support, publications and materials, and anything else that you want to make your fundraising event a success. We can even help promote the event in your local paper.

Please ring 029 2078 6676 or email ievans@mssociety.org.uk for more information.

MS with Attitude – Welshpool

Why not come and try some new activities at the **MS with Attitude Day** on **24 September 2011** at:

Red Ridge Centre
Cefn Coch
Welshpool
Powys
SY21 0AZ

There is something for everyone - no matter what age or ability.

Come and challenge yourself : try some new activities, or ones that you thought were no longer possible. Activities include zip wires, canoeing, horse riding, alternative therapies and lots more.

Why not get your branch committee together to organise transport for your members and take a minibus or coach?

For more information or to request a booking form please visit www.mssociety.org.uk/wales or contact Sue Jones on 01633 889290.

New Assembly, new opportunities

Thank you to all of the committee members who made contact with prospective Assembly Candidates before the recent Welsh General Election.

With a combination of Assembly Members retiring and parties gaining and losing seats, there were 23 new AMs elected. You can find out who your new AMs are by visiting www.assemblywales.org.

Are you a new committee member?

A large number of new committee members have been elected in branches across Wales, so we are in the process of arranging training.

Every new committee member must undertake induction training where they will learn more about their role and the branch essentials.

If you are a new committee member or you are the chair of a branch with new committee members on it, could you please contact Sue Jones for Mid and South Wales, and Urtha Felda for North Wales.

- Sue Jones, Local Support Development Officer – 01633 889290 or email sjones@mssociety.org.uk
- Urtha Felda, Area Development Officer (North Wales) – 020 8827 0212 or email ufelda@mssociety.org.uk

Risk management volunteers

We are looking for volunteers who have an interest in health and safety risk management to become Regional Risk Management Volunteers (RRMVs).

RRMVs will play an important role helping branches with audits and ensuring that local services are up to standard.

If you would like further information about this role, please contact Sue Jones on 01633 889290 or email sjones@mssociety.org.uk.

Benefits and MS events

Recent government announcements about changes to Incapacity Benefit, Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) and Disability Living Allowance (DLA) have caused concern amongst some people with MS. With support from branches across Wales, MS Society Cymru is running a series of events to:

- update people with MS on disability benefits changes
- give tips on how to make successful claims and appeals
- explain how to cover MS issues such as fatigue and variability in assessments for ESA and DLA.

Over 300 people have attended the seven events we have run so far, with a further 200 booked on to the remaining sessions. The final sessions are in Wrexham on 13 July and Bangor on 15 July.

We'd like to thank all the volunteers from branches who have helped to host these events, and the branches who have funded the venues.

MS Training for Department of Work and Pensions staff

MS Society Cymru has also run MS awareness training for key Department of Work and Pensions staff. The benefits decision makers in North Wales for ESA will be receiving training on MS, and we hope to deliver similar events in other parts of Wales. We hope that this training will improve the understanding of benefits decision makers about the difficulties people with MS experience at work.

The Minister for Employment, Chris Grayling, said "I was glad to hear of the local activity of the MS Society in training a group of decision makers in North Wales. I am happy to look at how we can replicate this across the network."

Do you know your local AMs?

We are looking to visit every new AM over the next few months and would like your help. If you have good links with any of the new Assembly Members, could you contact Joseph Carter and let him know? Establishing good links with as many Assembly Members as possible is a great way to help put MS on the map and can help us improve services.

If you know your local AM or would be willing to meet with your AM together with Joseph, please ring 029 2078 6676 or email jcarter@mssociety.org.uk.

For Scotland

New grants training in Scotland

All Scottish branches will have received an invitation to the grants training sessions in Scotland. The first two sessions have already taken place (in Aberdeen and the Borders) but you can still sign up for the following:

- 9 July, Perth
- 13 August, Glasgow
- 20 August, Inverness
- 27 August, Glasgow South
- 3 September, Stirling

All sessions start at 11am and finish at 3pm and include lunch and refreshments. They cover the new grant application forms, guidance and reporting. Training is for all branch chairs, treasurers, secretaries and support officers, along with any other committee members who may be involved in grant giving or support in some way in your branch.

You can all attend together, or arrange to attend different sessions. Individual branch training may be provided outside these sessions in exceptional circumstances – please discuss with your Area Development Officer (ADO).

Please contact the grants team for more information and to book. Email us at grantsscotland@mssociety.org.uk. Or you can register online at www.mssociety.org.uk/scotland – go to the events section.

New grants resources

We have produced a handy new booklet called *Financial assistance from the MS Society*, which introduces our different grant funds for people affected by MS. It includes information on:

- the Individual Support Grant Fund
- the Carers Opportunities Fund
- the Young Carers Fund

We have also produced a factsheet about the Short Breaks and Activities Fund.

We hope these will help you promote the financial assistance available from the MS Society Scotland.

For copies, please contact the Office for Scotland at msscotland@mssociety.org.uk or on 0131 335 4050.

Committee Handbook

Have you got your committee handbook yet? *Making it work*, the new handbook for committee members, is being gradually distributed to branches in Scotland. Contact your ADO or Lynda Boyce with any questions: lboyce@mssocietyscotland.org.uk or 0131 335 4074.

MS Week reception and MS Register

We hope that you had a good MS Week – and that you have signed up to the MS Register to help map MS!

The Register was launched in Scotland at Edinburgh's Dynamic Earth, a very successful event attended by MSPs, scientists and members of the MS Society. You can check out pictures from the event at www.facebook.com/mssocietyscotland.

Guests heard that the MS Register will, for the first time, record information from people living with MS as well as information from clinicians and health professionals.

David McNiven, Director of the MS Society in Scotland said: "The MS Register has the potential to transform our understanding of MS, its symptoms and what services people living with MS need. I am delighted that so many people turned out to help us put MS on the Map"

People with MS can join the MS Register online by going to **www.ukmsregister.org**. You can also still get involved in other ways. See pages 3 and 4 – and send back the checklist on pages 5 and 6 to let us know what you did for MS Week 2011.

Scottish annual review

Our annual review of 2010 is now available. You can download a copy from www.mssociety.org.uk/scotland or request a copy from Hannah Maunder at hmaunder@mssociety.org.uk or on 0131 335 4050.

Keep our manifesto on the agenda!

The elections are over and the map of Scotland is looking pretty yellow (ie. SNP)! As new MSPs from all parties take their seats in Holyrood there has never been a better time to get loud about the MS Society manifesto. The new MSPs will be keen to get to know their constituents and the issues that affect them.

We were pleased to welcome seven (mostly new) MSPs to our MS Week reception, and found that they were all keen to get involved in our work – Kevin Stewart from Aberdeen Central has already lodged parliamentary questions about physiotherapy provision.

Our manifesto highlights the ways your MSP can make a real difference to people with MS:

- Make excellence the standard in healthcare

- Ensure research is a priority
- Put people in control

If you can spare ten minutes, why not write to your MSP about our manifesto? Do you have a little longer? Why not organise for your MSP to speak at a branch meeting? It doesn't matter now much time you have to spare – your help can make all the difference.

If you would like to get loud on behalf of people with MS, contact Joanne O'Neill, Policy Officer, on 0131 335 4050 or email joneill@mssociety.org.uk.

Loch Ness Marathon

The marathon is an excellent opportunity to reach new donors in your local area while raising funds for the branch.

In 2010, 15 MS Society runners took part in the Loch Ness Marathon and raised almost £8,000 to help people living with MS in Scotland. The runners, ranging in age from 28 to 41, raised an average of £525 each. This year, the MS Society has 'charity assured' places available to runners who wish to run to support their local branch.

Ballot entries for the Loch Ness Marathon on 2 October have now closed and runners can only enter the Loch Ness Marathon by running for charity. Why not target local running or sports clubs who might like the places?

Any branch runners joining the MS Society team will receive a running pack from the MS Society Scotland, which includes a t-shirt, sponsor forms and support with their fundraising and training. The Fundraising Team will be at the finish line on 2 October to cheer every MS Society runner home. After the big event, monies raised will be passed back to the branches that recruited the runner, minus the entry fee for the race which is £90.

We will send out recruitment packs in the coming weeks with further details on how your runners can join the MS Society Scotland's Team. In the meantime, if you have any questions or want to register a runner now, please contact Fiona Harvey, Community and Events Fundraiser, on 0131 335 4065 or at fharvey@mssociety.org.uk.

Share your Cake Break successes

Congratulations to all who hosted a Cake Break. We've no doubt each and every one was a great success, raising the profile of your branch and generating funds.

If you've not yet completed and returned your branch income return form, please send it to Hazel at hjohnstone@mssociety.org.uk.

This will help us determine how much has been raised overall in Scotland from Cake Break, so we can monitor the effectiveness of the event.

MS Week 2011 – Putting MS on the map

We would like to thank you for all your efforts to put MS on the map during MS Week 2011. See pages 3 and 4 for an overview. We had a fantastic range of events in Northern Ireland with extensive press coverage.

In the lead up to MS Week, we had two Map MS roadshows in Foyleside shopping centre in Derry/ Londonderry and Castlecourt shopping centre in Belfast. People were able to come along and record their story and explain why they want to put MS on the map. You can view the videos from the roadshows at www.mapms.org.uk.

We started MS Week with an **MLA reception at the NI Assembly** at Stormont to officially launch the **MS Register**. This was a fantastic event, attended by 164 people – 120 MS Society members, Department of Health officials including the Chief Medical Officer, health and social care staff and 44 MLAs, including the new Minister for Health, Edwin Poots and the Chair of the Health Committee, Michelle Gildernew.

One of the highlights of the event was a talk from MS Society volunteer and member Cliona Evans from Foyle Branch. Cliona spoke about the importance of the MS Register and her own personal experience of MS. The new Health Minister, Edwin Poots, also spoke at the event and welcomed the MS Register, saying:

"The MS Society has a long history of providing much needed person-centred support to MS sufferers in Northern Ireland which can make a big difference to a person's life. And of course, the Society also promotes, encourages and helps fund research into the causes and management of MS. The contribution the Society is making in the area of research is an essential component in helping us to build the kind of health service we all want."

Branch events included a reception for Antrim Branch members with the Mayor of Antrim, and street collections and information stands in Belfast, Coleraine, Omagh and Strabane, Cake Break events in Queens University Belfast and Mid Ulster Branch and many, many more!

We had great coverage in local media with feature articles in the Belfast Telegraph, Belfast Newsletter, Irish News and Sunday Life as well as articles in many local papers. MS Society NI and MS Week was also covered by several radio stations including U105, Belfast City Beat and the Q Network.

What did you do for MS Week? Fill in and send back the checklist on pages 5 and 6 to let us know.

For Northern Ireland

Family in Focus Programme Update

The Family in Focus Programme was launched with a Family Information Day at Dundonald Ice Bowl on Saturday 7 May. The day was a great success with 39 people attending from throughout Northern Ireland and really positive feedback:

"Today was fantastic for younger families – excellent"

"Brilliant, thank you – it is vital for families and children of all ages to share and not feel alone, afraid or different"

The next event in the Families in Focus Programme will be a Fun Day and BBQ on Saturday 25 June from 1pm – 4pm at MS Society NI Resource Centre, 34 Annadale Avenue, Belfast. Everyone is welcome: please encourage members to come along. It is a great chance to meet other people and families affected by MS.

Information Days 2011

The topic for our 2011 Northern Ireland information events is **The role of the consultant neurologist and benefits of neuro-physiotherapy**.

These events are a great opportunity to find out more about the role of the consultant neurologist and current and upcoming treatments. People will have the opportunity to ask questions in both the neurologist and neuro-physiotherapy sessions.

There are two events remaining, so please let members know they are coming up:

- **Saturday 3 September** – MS Society NI Resource Centre, 34 Annadale Avenue, Belfast. Guest Neurologist Dr Stanley Hawkins.
- **Saturday 8 October** – Dunsilly Hotel, Antrim. Guest Neurologist Dr Gavin McDonnell.

Dawn Harrison, neuro-physiotherapist at MS Society NI, will also be speaking at these events.

If you or members would like to attend, please contact Mark Hatte on 028 9080 2802 or mhatte@mssociety.org.uk.

NI Branches catch the exercise bug!

Dawn Harrison, our neuro-physiotherapist, has been visiting branches throughout Northern Ireland. Dawn has discussed with members what activity and exercise services they would like to see developed in their branch area.

Members have shown great interest in developing health and fitness services. One of the main requests has been that we work with local leisure services to run these activities. This would give members the opportunity to improve their confidence about using their local leisure centre and accessing other health and fitness opportunities provided there.

Following this, Dawn has established close links with the Active Communities Projects. They are based in local leisure centres and their remit includes promoting activity for people with disabilities. So far, they are providing specialist classes for people with MS in three areas – Larne and Antrim Forum leisure centres and the MS Society Resource Centre in Belfast. These are weekly exercise classes and they provide an opportunity for people to motivate each other and socialise.

If there is not an Active Communities project running in your branch area, there are still ways your branch can promote exercise and activity to your members. For example, Dawn has carried out two exercise taster sessions for the Coleraine Self-Help group and has also provided information sessions on physiotherapy and exercise to several branches.

This is a fantastic start to developing a range of exercise and activity services for people with MS throughout Northern Ireland. Dawn will continue working with branches to promote and improve access to exercise opportunities in all areas. If you would like to discuss developing these services in your area, please contact Dawn or your Area Development Officer on 028 9080 2802.

Street Collections

Does your branch organise a street collection? If so please let the Fundraising Team know. You can contact us on 028 9080 2802 or screighton@mssociety.org.uk.

The Fundraising Team is considering dates for collections in late 2011 and into 2012 and will be in contact with branches in order to avoid duplication. We are aware that there are many areas where currently we do not organise collections and we would like to change that. Could your branch organise a collection with the support of the Fundraising Team?

If you are interested, get in touch with Samantha Creighton on the details above.

Climb that Mountain

Or at least encourage someone else to climb that mountain… We have two very different mountain events coming up in the near future. Our annual Slieve Donard walk will take place on Sunday 21 August and we would love to see your branch represented.

For the more adventurous, our annual Ben Nevis challenge takes place on the weekend of 16 – 18 September.

If you or someone you know is interested in either event, please give the Fundraising Team a call on 028 9080 2802.

wheel & walk

Our **wheel & walk** events are fully accessible fundraising events that can be completed on foot, in a wheelchair, scooter, pushchair or bicycle. We have a number coming up in the near future:

- Causeway Coastal walk, Saturday 10 September
- Lurgan Park wheel & walk, Saturday 17 September
- Castlewellan Forest Park wheel & walk, Sunday 25 September

Please do what you can to encourage members of your branch to participate. Contact us on 028 9080 2802 for more information or to register for any of our wheel & walk events.

Gala Ball

We are delighted to announce details for our 2011 "Step into Christmas" Gala Ball. This glittering event will take place at the Ramada Hotel, Shaw's Bridge, Belfast on **Saturday 26 November**.

We will confirm our celebrity host and entertainment in the very near future. We are though, very pleased to confirm that the "Professionals", who proved a major hit last year, will once again have us dancing into the wee small hours – after our champagne reception, fabulous meal and after dinner entertainment of course!

The 2010 ball was very well attended by branches and many people affected by MS also had a really memorable evening.

We are offering a special "Early Bird" booking rate this year that we would encourage your branch and members to consider. Tickets normally cost £50 per ticket but can be purchased up to Friday 30 September at £45 per ticket.

In 2010 a number of branches chose to subsidise members' ticket costs, something we would also encourage you to consider this year. We will be writing directly to branches with more detailed information soon. Meanwhile, if you would like to take advantage of our "Early Bird" booking rate or would like more information please contact the Fundraising Team on 028 9080 2802 or email tmallon@mssociety.org.uk.

Classifieds

Please share these opportunities with people with MS and carers in your ares.

Aberdaron, Wales

Self-catering or bed and breakfast in fully accessible, single-storey house on Llyn Peninsula in north-west Wales. Ideal for groups of friends or families. Open-plan living area with fully equipped kitchen, 4 comfortable en-suite double or twin bedrooms, barbecue area, conservatory; secluded position. Seaside village with mile-long sandy beach. Great walking and golf courses nearby. Two all-terrain scooters free for guests. To check availability and book see www.aberdaroncottage.co.uk or call 01758 760 652.

Appleby, Cumbria

Hambleton and Richmondshire Branch has a six-person caravan near Appleby, Cumbria. One double, one twin, a double in the lounge, a shower and all mod cons. Wheelchair adapted access via ramp and veranda. The site has stunning views, with a restaurant, outdoor pool, shop, laundry and lots for children to do. Available April to October – dates still available. From £100 to £250. For further information or availability contact John and Doris Watson on 01677 424455 or jw@jwtc.freeserve.co.uk.

Amberwood Holiday Lodge

West Herts Branch has a holiday lodge at Shorefield Holiday Village, near Lymington, Hampshire, for people with MS, families and carers. The lodge can accommodate up to six people in comfort. It has a master bedroom with en suite shower room, a twin bedded room, bathroom, and lounge/ kitchen area with double fold-out sofa bed. New windows have just been fitted and decking renewed and painted. Further details from Ken Gordon on 01442 243023 or at ken@subcondrilling.co.uk.

Lisnaskea

MS Society Northern Ireland has two fully accessible chalets available for hire at the SHARE village in Lisnaskea. The cost is £150 per week and includes a SHARE fitness leisure pass. Bookings are taken on a first come, first served basis. To book a holiday please contact Mark on 028 9080 2802 or mhatte@mssociety.org.uk.

Spain

Detached two bedroom bungalow in Fuerteventura, Canary Islands, Spain. Suitable for people with limited mobility, with ramped access and wide corridors. Spacious lounge/ diner, separate, modern kitchen, patio and gardens. On level development with easy access to nearby supermarket. From £195/ week for 4 people. For more see www.canariesvilla.co.uk or contact Graham and Alison Adgie on 0153 973 1835 or gilcruce@talktalk.net.

Mention of advertisement by the MS Society of products or services is not an endorsement by the MS Society, its volunteers or staff.

Teamspirit directory

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020 8438 0700

MS Society Cymru
Temple Court
Cathedral Road
Cardiff
CF11 9HA
02920 786 676

MS Society Northern Ireland
The Resource Centre
34 Annadale Avenue
Belfast
BT7 3JJ
02890 802 802

MS Society Scotland
National Office
Ratho Park
88 Glasgow Road
Ratho Station
Newbridge
EH28 8PP
0131 335 4050

Support groups
There are support group for Jewish people, lesbians and gay men, Afro-Caribbean people, Asian people, and former and serving members of the armed forces.
020 8438 0856
susmani@mssociety.org.uk

Find us online
www.mssociety.org.uk
www.mssociety.org.uk/wales
www.mssocietyni.org.uk
www.mssocietyscotland.org.uk

www.facebook.com/mssociety
www.twitter.com/mssocietyuk

www.youngms.org.uk
www.facebook.com/childrenwithMS

Grants
020 8438 0700
grants@mssociety.org.uk
(England, Wales, Northern Ireland)

0131 335 4050
enquiries@mssocietyscotland.org.uk (Scotland)

National MS Helpline
0808 800 8000

MS Information Line
020 8438 0799

Membership
020 8438 0759

Volunteering Team
020 8438 0944

Fundraising
0870 241 3565

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