No. 176 May 2011

Multiple Sclerosis Society

Teamspirit

For branch officers and national support group committee members

Welcome to the May edition of Teamspirit.

Contents

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

Get in touch

We’re always keen to hear your feedback, so if you have any comments, suggestions or ideas email comms@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 comms@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/ general funds	Research
Basingstoke & District			£2,000
Belfast		£1,200	£800
Bexley & Dartford	Cambridge Myelin Repair Centre	£2,500	
Bridgend & District	MS Nurses	£1,000	£1,000
Canterbury & District			£1,000
Cheltenham & North Cotswold			£3,000
Coleraine	Young people's event	£1,000	
Dunoon & District	General funds	£1,000	
Fermanagh			£2,000
Hastings & Rother			£490
Henley On Thames & District			£2,000
Hereford & District			£5,000
Kings Lynn & District	Edinburgh Translational Research Centre (SRG no. 838)	£5,000	
Leighton Buzzard & District	Tissue Bank	£500	£500
Lewisham	MS Nurses	£1,000	£1,000
Mendip			£3,000
Redbridge			£400
Scarborough & District	MS Nurses	£2,000	
Shetland Branch			£10,000
Shrewsbury & District (legacy received by the branch)	Cambridge Myelin Repair Centre Fairer Financial Assistance Fund Tissue Bank	£10,000 £2,500 £5,000	£2,500
Sutton	Cambridge Myelin Repair Centre Helpline Fairer Financial Assistance Fund Tissue Bank	£6,000 £3,000 £3,000 £3,000	£3,000
Waltham Forest	MS Nurses	£5,000	
West Hertfordshire			£7,500
Totals		**£52,700**	**£45,190**

These are donations recorded in January and February 2011, except Northern Ireland donations, which were recorded in November 2010. Funds marked 'general' are not earmarked.

News and events

MS Week
23-29 May 2011

Putting MS on the map

MS Week is an opportunity to unite everyone whose life is touched by MS. Our main aims are to raise awareness of MS and raise money. This year's theme is **putting MS on the map**.

Use the MS Week pack to make the most of MS Week for your branch or group. There are activities you can do whether you have 10 minutes, an hour, a day or even a bit more time.

Your MS Week pack
Chairs should have received an MS Week pack in March with information about MS Week and putting MS on the map. The information from the packs is online so everyone can access it.

Go to www.mssociety.org.uk/branchzone and look for the MS Week 2011 link on the right-hand side. Email msweek@mssociety.org.uk or call 020 8438 0944 if you need a copy in the post.

The MS Register

MS Week 2011 focuses on research and we will launch the **MS Register**.

The aim of the MS Register is to provide, for the first time in the UK, an accurate picture of how MS impacts on the lives of people who have it. From 23 May, anyone with MS will be able to log onto a website and provide information about the impact that MS has on their life. We'll put the link on the MS Society website on 23 May. There is more information about the register in the MS Week pack.

Map MS

Many people affected by MS want to share their experiences and hear about what it's like for others. That's why we're giving anyone whose life is touched by MS the opportunity to share their story through the Map MS project.

All you have to do is film a 30 second video and upload it to our dedicated MS Week website, which will launch around the beginning of May at **www.mapms.org.uk**.

Do share your story – anyone with access to a computer and webcam or a smartphone can do it. If you are not online, encourage other people like your family, friends and members to film their story and put MS on the map.

The videos will be added to a map of the UK, so if you live in Glasgow, for example, your film will pop up at that location.

We can all use this powerful tool to raise awareness and when fundraising - it will put hundreds of MS stories all in one place.

The Map MS roadshow

During May a special stand will travel the country, stopping at shopping centres and other venues. It will visit Derry/Londonderry (6 May), Belfast (10 May), Glasgow (13th), Merry Hill (16th), Newcastle (17th), Liverpool (20th), Edinburgh (TBC), Cardiff (25th) and London (TBC).

News and events

The roadshow aims to raise awareness about MS amongst the general public. There will also be an opportunity to film your story, so people affected by MS can take part in Map MS at the roadshow itself. We'll then upload stories to the map.

If you are in a roadshow area or nearby

- Are you able to be a helper on the day? We need people to help out on the stand.
- Can you, your family and friends come and record a 30-second film on the day about your experience of MS? You don't need ANY technical expertise.
- Please encourage the rest of your branch to come along if you are nearby. Can you organise an outing and bring members along? This will really make sure we create a buzz.

Please email **msweek@mssociety.org.uk** or call 020 8438 0944 with any questions, to let us know you are coming or to register as a helper – Map MS needs you!

MS Week reception

We will be holding an MS Week reception in parliament where we'll ask MPs to put MS on the map in their constituencies. We need your help to make sure that as many MPs attend as possible!

Write to your MP using our template letter at www.mssociety.org.uk/msweek under 'What can you do'. The more constituents contact them, the more likely they are to go. For other ways to engage your MP see the MS Week pack.

National events in the run up and during MS Week

MS Register – launched 23 May

Map MS – online from early May at www.mapms.org.uk

Map MS roadshow – from 6-27 May

Cake break – Our flagship fundraiser will happen on Friday 20 May (or you can pick a date that suits you). Anyone and everyone can get involved! See page 16.

Viral film – A director from Aardman Animations, makers of Wallace and Gromit, has volunteered to make a film to raise awareness of MS.

Parliament – MS Week receptions for parliamentarians and/ or high value supporters in Stormont, London and Edinburgh.

Media activity – There will be media coverage throughout the week.

News and events

Open meetings 2011

Help us shape the future of the MS Society by having your say at one of our open meetings. You will hear about our latest research and activities and be able to take part in discussions on fundraising and campaigns. This will influence where we commit our efforts in the future.

This is also an opportunity to meet our trustees and senior staff and discuss with them what you think the issues are that affect people living with MS. “**A great opportunity for members, staff and trustees to talk openly together**” was just one of the positive comments from members who attended last year’s open meetings.

Dates and locations
You can go to whichever meeting is convenient for you:

- London area – Sunday 8 May, NCVO, central **London**
- Wales – Saturday 14 May at Ramada Plaza Hotel, **Wrexham**
- West – Saturday 14 May at the Birmingham Metropole, **Birmingham**
- North – Saturday 21 May at Leyland Hotel, Preston, **Lancashire**
- Scotland – Saturday 4 June at Perth Concert Hall, **Perth**
- East – Saturday 11 June, Marriott Hotel, Huntingdon, **Cambridgeshire**
- South – Saturday 18 June at the Hilton, Maidstone, **Kent**

The Northern Ireland meeting took place on 16 April while Teamspirit was at press.

Set the agenda

Open meetings will be the main place where members’ resolutions for the AGM in September 2011 will be discussed and formed. This gives us all the chance to share our views, right across the UK. Think you have a topic that could be a resolution? See the next article for what to do.

See the England, Wales and Scotland pages for booking information, or visit http://www.mssociety.org.uk/news_events/events/open_meetings.html. Hope to see you there.

Call for AGM resolutions

Is there something the MS Society could be doing differently in order to better support people living with MS?

Any member can propose business to be included in the Society’s Annual General Meeting (AGM) by formally requesting the Chief Executive to consider a proposal on or before 2 July. We’d like to encourage you and other members to discuss your proposals at open meetings (see above) over the coming months. The AGM will be held on Saturday 10 September in London.

If you think you have a topic that could be a resolution, let us know. Email Sonja Pinnell at governance@mssociety.org.uk or call 020 8438 0862.

Short Breaks and Activities Fund

The grants team will launch the Short Breaks and Activities (SBA) Fund UK-wide on 3 May 2011.

The SBA Fund was developed to support our new approach to funding short breaks, respite care and holidays We've piloted it in Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland. From 3 May the fund will be available to people affected by MS in England.

The fund is so far proving to be successful in its aim to provide greater individual support to people affected by MS, wherever they live and whatever their needs are for short breaks. Grants can be considered for:

- respite care, either in the home or at a care centre or similar
- an activity (or series of activities), experience, short break or holiday for someone with MS and/ or their carer
- salary costs for a professional carer needed to help someone with MS, or their carer, have a break either in their home or elsewhere
- travel, accommodation and disability equipment hire costs during a break
- some alternative or complementary therapies

Grants have been awarded so far from the fund for a variety of short breaks. The first grant awarded was for a family holiday to Egypt for a lady with MS in her 40s, her husband and their son.
Her husband wrote in their application: "We try to live our lives to the best of our abilities, but the strain on myself and the family is forcing our relationship and the family to breaking point. I feel that if my wife and the family had something to focus on, it may help reduce the stress and fatigue the illness constantly puts on her".

The couple's adult daughter will be staying at the resort at the same time and will be able to assist with caring for her mother so that her father has a break.

Another application for a family holiday came from a 32-year-old woman with two young children. She wrote that: "for myself and my husband it would be a chance to relax and reconnect with each other as a couple. We have both lost so much independence as a result of my MS. I rely on him, and he never gets a break from looking after me and the children".

Both of these women are wheelchair users and have used their SBA Fund grants to pay for accessible accommodation with their partners and families. Other applicants have received grants towards the cost of accessible transport or equipment they may need when on holiday.

The SBA Fund can also help people with the cost of more traditional forms of respite care. One man's social worker wrote about her client: "He is not able to get outside often and his last break was in early 2010 when he went to a Vitalise Centre. He had a great time and came back feeling a lot happier in himself". Vitalise is a charity that provides respite care and short breaks in a number of centres across the UK.

This gentleman does not have a carer living with him and is therefore not entitled to any respite care funding through social services. We have been able to award him a grant towards another week at a Vitalise centre.

Other grants have been awarded for a whole variety of requests: flexible care hours to enable a person to go away with her husband when he is obliged to travel for work, help towards gym membership for a wheelchair user whose local gym provides exercise sessions for people with disabilities, and the cost of a PA to accompany a family on holiday to assist with a person's care needs.

Top-ups to social services funding for respite care is something the Society has always helped with and we will continue to do so from the SBA Fund if this sort of assistance is requested. The fund is in place to enable people affected by MS to access **the sort of break they choose, whatever that may be.**

All grant applications need to be accompanied by a letter of support from an appropriate health or social care professional explaining why the applicant needs a break and how the need relates to their MS.

The SBA Fund is administered by the grants teams at MS National Centre in London and the national Office for Scotland. We have developed a new application form for the fund, which you can get from the grants teams on the contact details below.

Branches are not obliged to contribute towards the cost of requests to the fund, but in most instances we will contact you when an application has been received from someone in your area, to ensure that grants are not duplicated by your branch. If your committee is keen to offer a grant towards the request it would, of course, be welcome.

Please promote the SBA Fund to people affected by MS in your area.

If you would like more information about the SBA Fund or an application form, please contact the grants team on:

- England, Wales, Northern Ireland: 020 8438 0700 or grants@mssociety.org.uk
- Scotland: 0131 335 4081 or grants@mssocietyscotland.org.uk

Other grants news

We will be welcoming our new Grants Manager, Julie Gilson, to the team at MS National Centre at the end of April.

We would like to thank you for bearing with us during the last few months when we may have taken longer than usual to respond to some of your enquiries and requests. We can assure you that with Julie's arrival and the recent addition to the team of Tracy Miles, our new grants officer, normal service will soon be resumed!

News and events

Join the Hardest Hit protest on 11 May!

We need your support! As part of our campaign against cuts to disability benefits, we will be taking part in a mass protest in London on 11 May with other leading disability charities.

We want to make sure people with MS are represented, so we hope that you and members in your community will join us and help us get loud!

Please help us by spreading the word and advertising the Hardest Hit campaign and protest on 11 May in your newsletter, if your next edition comes out in time. You can use the following information:

Join the Hardest Hit campaign and protest!

The MS Society is supporting the Hardest Hit campaign, which brings together individuals and organisations to send a clear message to the Government: Disabled people, those living with a long-term condition and their families are being hit hard by cuts to the benefits and services they need to live their lives – stop these cuts.

Visit www.hardesthit.org.uk to find out more and support the campaign by:

- signing up to join the Hardest Hit protest at the Houses of Parliament in London on 11 May
- writing to your MP
- joining our online protest by sending in your stories, photos and videos to info@hardesthit.org.uk or sharing your story at: www.surveymonkey.com/s/msstories

You can also join the campaign on Facebook and follow it on Twitter. For more information, sign up to receive our regular Campaigns Network updates by visiting www.mssociety.org.uk/campaignsnetwork or visit our Facebook pages at www.facebook.com/mssociety.

MS nurses campaign

The MS Society's 2011 campaign to save MS nurses launched on 16 March. There was media coverage of our campaign in both the *Guardian* and *Nursing Standard* magazine.

Twenty-eight MPs have already signed up to an early day motion (a parliamentary version of a petition) supporting MS nurses. You can read more about the campaign and write to your MP on this issue using our template letter at: www.mssociety.org.uk/savemsnurses.

Become a trustee or council member

We need volunteers to join the MS Society's national councils in Scotland, Wales, England and Northern Ireland and to be trustees of the Society's Board.

Council members and trustees are a voice for people living with MS across the UK and contribute to the governance and management of the MS Society. People with a wide range of skills and backgrounds are needed, to speak for the diverse communities where MS has an impact.

The Board of Trustees is committed to representation from all nations of the UK, in particular from Wales and Northern Ireland, and is also particularly looking for people with knowledge of diversity issues, charity law and investment and property management.

The Board and all councils would also welcome applications from young people, women, and black and minority ethnic groups.

The vacancies

- The Board of trustees has six trustee vacancies
- The England Council is recruiting to six vacancies in Cheshire & Merseyside, East Midlands, Kent, London, Surrey & Sussex and Hertfordshire, Essex & Bedfordshire
- Wales has three vacancies
- Northern Ireland has four vacancies
- Scotland is recruiting between eight and 12 council members

How to apply

Applications need to be submitted by 9 May (unless otherwise stated below). For more information about what the trustee and council member roles involve or to request an application pack, contact:

Trustee role:
Email governance@mssociety.org.uk or phone 020 8438 0862.

England Council: Email ltennison@mssociety.org.uk or phone 020 8438 0807. Applications need to be submitted by 12 noon on **13 May**.

Northern Ireland Council: Email aslater@mssociety.org.uk or phone 028 9080 2802.

Scotland Council: Email governance@mssocietyscotland.org.uk or phone 0131 335 4062. Applications need to be submitted by 29 April.

Wales National Council: Email mscymru@mssociety.org.uk or phone 029 2078 6676.

News and events

Update on the Vetting and Barring Scheme (VBS)

For England and Wales

The Government has now released details of its review into the Vetting and Barring Scheme (VBS) and its proposals for reform.

These proposals apply directly to England and Wales. Information on how they will affect Northern Ireland will be released in due course. A separate scheme runs in Scotland. Details of who you should contact with any questions are at the end of this article.

Although this will mean important changes for branches and support groups, they will not happen immediately. In the meantime, branches and support groups **must** continue to carry out CRB checks on all those working or volunteering regularly with people affected by MS or children.

What has happened so far?

In October 2009 the Labour government began to introduce a new system designed to ensure that anyone who was known to be a risk to vulnerable groups was prevented from working or volunteering with them. This was known as the VBS.

In June 2010 the VBS was put on hold to allow time for the new coalition government to look again at the scheme. In February 2011 this government released details of the outcome of the review.

The outcome was a number of proposals for a scaling back of the VBS and reform of criminal records checks. The proposals are:

- Existing organisations responsible for criminal records checks should be merged into one new organisation.
- This new organisation should make decisions on whether an individual should be barred from working or volunteering with vulnerable groups.
- Only those working or volunteering closely and regularly with vulnerable groups should be affected by barring arrangements.
- The VBS required individuals to register with a barring organisation - this should be scrapped and information held on individuals should not be continuously monitored.
- The new organisation should carry out CRB checks but the number of people who need to have one should be reduced.
- People should be able to transfer CRB checks between jobs and roles. This should be made possible through the development of an online system that allows organisations to quickly check whether any updated information is held on a person.
- Penalties should be enforced against an organisation if they put forward an individual for a CRB check where it is not necessary.

How does this affect my branch or national support group?

The changes that have been announced will not happen immediately. They will happen over a period of time. The government still needs to talk with organisations about the impact the proposal might have and work on a plan for implementing them. Also, a number of the changes need new legislation and this will take time to complete and may mean some procedures change. Updates will be included in Teamspirit and on our website as and when we receive them.

In the meantime branches and support groups **must** continue to carry out CRB checks on all those working or volunteering regularly with vulnerable adults and/ or children. This includes support officers/ volunteers, transport officers, drivers, escorts, information officers and social secretaries. However as roles do vary across the MS Society, you must make sure you consider each new volunteer on a case by case basis, depending on their role.

Further information is available on our website. Alternatively you can contact:

- **England and Wales** – Liz Wigelsworth, Volunteering Officer, on 020 8438 0749 or lwigelsworth@mssociety.org.uk
- **Northern Ireland** – the development team at the Resource Centre on 0289 0802 802 or info@mssocietyni.co.uk
- for the separate scheme in **Scotland** – Lynda Boyce on 0131 335 4074 or lboyce@mssociety.org.uk

Volunteers' Week 2011 (1-7 June)

Hot on the heels of MS Week …

Volunteers' Week is an annual national event celebrating the fantastic contribution that millions of volunteers like you make across the UK.

The week is an opportunity to raise the profile of volunteering, recognise the efforts of current volunteers and recruit new ones.

During 1-7 June organisations will hold hundreds of events throughout the country, including showcases of different volunteer roles, volunteer recruitment events and awards ceremonies.

In the run up to Volunteers' Week, hints and tips will be available on Branchzone to make sure your branch or support group can make the most of it.

Please get in contact with the volunteering team at volunteering@mssociety.org.uk and let us know about your plans for the week. It's always great to hear about the fantastic work of our volunteers and we can share your stories with other branches and support groups in need of inspiration.

Questions about Volunteers' Week?

Contact Liz Wigelsworth at lwigelsworth@mssociety.org.uk or 020 8438 0749, or visit www.volunteersweek.org.uk.

Volunteers in Scotland can speak to Lynda Boyce at lboyce@mssociety.org.uk or on 0131 335 4074.

New MS Society website just weeks away

The new MS Society website is taking shape and we're aiming to launch in MS Week.

This month, a bit more about what it could do for your branch.

When the site goes live, every branch will be plotted on a map of the UK. Visitors will be able to navigate around the map or put in their postcode to find their local branch. They can then click through to their branch's web pages.

To begin with this will just be a single page with essential information but, as soon as the web editor training programme gets underway (see page 10 of March Teamspirit) you'll be able to start building up your area of the site and making use of the new features on offer.

There will be a range of tools to choose from, including:
- e-newsletters
- a branch blog
- adverts for new volunteers
- an events calendar

Apart from a new design, up-to-date technology and more flexibility, the main benefit will be in how the information your branch uploads to the site is presented.

At the moment, branches put information on their own websites and that's the only place it shows. Unless someone actually finds the branch website, they don't see what you post.

With the new site, everything you add to your section also goes into a central pool of content. You'll be able to tag it according to:
- what it is
- what it's about
- who it's for
- where it's happening

It can then automatically display on other relevant pages across the website - and target registered website users according to where they live and what they're interested in.

It's all about making the information your branch puts on the website work for you, actively flagging it up to people who might be interested in it rather than putting the onus on them to find your branch. They might not even know that the MS Society has branches, but still find yours because you're offering something they want.

There will be opportunities to test the site from mid-May, so please email webdevelopment@mssociety.org.uk to get involved.

Branchzone is also being given a complete facelift to fit into the new site design, and will be available shortly after the new website launches. We'll give you full details in July Teamspirit. In the meantime you can continue to access Branchzone at www.mssociety.org.uk/branchzone.

The MS Support Summit – and what this means for your branch

The West of England has successfully looked at new ways branches can give support to people affected by MS in a pilot programme called **Developing MS Support**. Details were announced at the MS Support Summit in Swindon on 9 March.

The following activities were trialled in branches in the West of England as part of the pilot:

- developing a team of support volunteers (rather than one support officer)
- volunteers are recruited, selected and interviewed
- a new four-day training course is given to volunteers (instead of one day as before)

At the summit, delegates heard about the success of the pilot and how positively staff and volunteers responded to this new approach. There was initially some uncertainty at the start of the project, but most were enthusiastic and willing to give it a try.

Following the pilot's success, this new approach will be gradually introduced to branches across the rest of the UK over the next two years. For those of you who already have support teams, this will build on the approach you already have in place.

So what were the reasons for doing this MS support pilot?

- Support officers are often overloaded – with a support team we can reach out to more people affected by MS and share the load.
- A lead support volunteer means somebody can co-ordinate the team and keep in touch with the wider committee.
- Sometimes people are interested in being a support volunteer but don't want to attend committee meetings – this means they don't have to, and gives them different roles to choose from.
- We wanted to give volunteers the training and support that this role needs.

The results

A peer review group, containing volunteers and staff, evaluated the pilot in detail. They interviewed pilot participants, and the results were compelling:

- 96 per cent of interviewees endorsed recruitment and selection of volunteers
- 80 per cent of those in support teams said they were working successfully
- 80 per cent (and 100 per cent of new volunteers) agreed that the new training provided the knowledge and skills needed to get started in the role.

The pilot was declared extremely successful by the review. The group recommended these changes be implemented nationally.

The recommendations made by the peer review can be found in the News section of Branchzone.

What are the benefits of this new approach?

We will be bringing this approach to other branches this year and next. It has many benefits.

Having a team of support volunteers

A team, instead of only one support officer, was very well received by volunteers within branches in the pilot.

Jane Lindsay, Lead Support Volunteer from Bournemouth Branch, gave a passionate and very well received talk at the summit about why it works. It gives the volunteers more opportunity to reach out to people – "I couldn't possibly do it on my own", she said.

Bournemouth now works very closely with their Local Support Development Officer (LSDO) and MS National Centre. Jane said this was one of the best things to come out of the whole process.

The flexibility to make it work for your region or nation

Flexibility is encouraged and each region can create a system that works for them.

Some branches in the West of England divide tasks between the different volunteers. One person looks after grants, with two others taking calls from people affected by MS and others doing home visits.

The lead support volunteer coordinates the team, supports them where needed and keeps in touch with the wider committee on support matters. This structure enables the team to develop new and creative ways to support people.

Kerry Lloyd is a volunteer Regional Support Mentor in the West Midlands who supports the volunteers themselves. She described how support volunteers now feel much more confident and less isolated as a result.

The training

The new four-day training course has been designed in consultation with support volunteers and staff and will be evaluated on an annual basis to make sure it responds to the changing demands and trends facing volunteers and people affected by MS today.

Sue Pym from Solihull Branch said: "The training has given me more confidence. The confidence to say 'I don't know, but I know where to find out.' "

What did people at the summit think?

Kate Mitchell, summit chair, highlighted that support will always be a work in progress and that there are challenges, and changes needed, to keep up with the needs of people affected by MS today.

After the workshops she reminded us to recognise that some branches had already taken a support team approach and that it had been evaluated by staff and volunteers as the best way forward.

Pat Crossley, Support Officer at Ballymoney Branch, travelled all the way from Northern

Ireland to attend the event. She summed up her feelings at the end of the day:

"I've been a support officer for almost thirty years, but today has been so exciting and refreshing. I've realised I need to keep learning and not always continue doing things the same way. I've certainly been rejuvenated today!"

This approach will bring consistent support to people affected by MS, across the whole UK, regardless of where they are.

What to do next

We will be bringing this approach to other branches this year and next. Please pass this article on to anyone who provides support in your branch.

When we bring the changes to your area, we'll also provide resources and guidance to support you.

If you would like to see the presentations, delegate pack and notes from the event please email volunteering@mssociety.org.uk or call 020 8438 0944.

If you would like to chat to somebody about the changes to support work or the training, please contact Phoebe White (pwhite@mssociety.org.uk or 020 8243 0942) or Hayley James (hjames@mssociety.org.uk or 020 8438 0751).

If you would like to be directly involved with our national work on MS support, please register your interest with Belinda Goodman (bgoodman@mssociety.org.uk or 020 8438 0924).

Online library catalogue

The new MS Society web-based library catalogue is now online. The library database provides easy access to the titles of hundreds of articles and publications from the MS Society, as well as links to key publications and articles on MS produced by other organisations.

Search the library database at www.mssociety.org.uk/library. Everyone can browse the catalogue online. You can also reserve items and monitor your loans by setting up your own membership account

For details please contact the MS Society librarian on 020 8438 9000 or at librarian@mssociety.org.uk.

Fundraising

It's Cake Break time …

It's fast approaching that time of year when we all get busy baking and tucking into scrumptious cakes. On Friday 20 May 2011 (or a date that suits you) help the MS Society hold its biggest and best ever Cake Break. This is one of our best loved fundraising events. Encourage friends, family and other volunteers to get together and enjoy delicious cakes and a cuppa whilst raising money for the MS Society.

Cake Break is a fantastic fundraising opportunity and also a great chance to raise awareness of your branch or support group in the local community by inviting people in to enjoy tasty treats, refreshments and a friendly chat. You can choose whether the money raised is donated to your branch or to nationally run programmes such as research. Simply indicate your choice when returning your donation.

Taking part is easy! Register for your free Cake Break host pack online at www.mssociety.org.uk/cakebreak or call us on 0845 481 1577 (when registering please quote Teamspirit).

Once you've registered, the Cake Break team will send you a host pack, containing step by step guidelines, posters, invites, a game, recipes and a Gift Aid form – everything you need to make your Cake Break a great success!

Why not ask schools, local businesses or community groups such as Rotary and Soroptimists to support the MS Society by running a cake break? They can also register using the contact details above.

We're also running an exciting Cake Break competition again this year with a chance to win a top-of-the-range Kenwood food processor or a hamper of seven delicious cooking kits from The Meal Kit Co. Visit www.mssociety.org.uk/cakebreak for terms and conditions.

Sign up for the MS Society's Golfing Masters

Take a swing for MS with our new golf competition. Get together with friends to play a round of golf at your favourite course using only three clubs, and raise money for your branch.

The top ten winning teams will get the chance to play at our MS Society golf final later in the year, as well as receiving professional coaching from golf pro Tony Johnstone.

All funds raised by branches or branch contacts can either be used nationally or earmarked to branches.

For more information, contact Anne Ridge at golf@mssociety.org.uk or call her on 0870 241 3565.

Tesco collections

All branches should have received information on whether or not they have been successful for the January – June 2011 collections. If you haven't received any information please email the community fundraising administrator at tesco@mssociety.org.uk or call 020 8438 0728.

If you are unable to take up a collection but happy for us to offer it to a neighbouring branch, please let us know as soon as possible.

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

In the past, some volunteers have contacted MS National Centre to tell us that they are the nominated Tesco contact for their branch. However, sometimes contacts stood down without letting us know, meaning some branches missed out on collections. Tesco contact information is not currently centralised or updated regularly from our side, either. This means unfortunately we cannot use this information when advising branches about Tesco collections.

To ensure that every branch has an equal opportunity to participate by receiving the information in a fair and consistent way, we will send the results of the July – November 2011 collections and 2012 application forms to the chair only of each branch. We hope that the chair will be able to swiftly pass this on, where necessary, to whoever is the nominated Tesco contact within the branch. If there is no chair registered on our database, the information will automatically go to your treasurer.

As always please ensure that all contact details for your branch are up to date by emailing membership@mssociety.org.uk or calling 020 8438 0759 with any changes.

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

Recycling scheme update

As you will know, in February the MS Society relaunched a new and improved recycling scheme in partnership with The Recycling Factory. The scheme has been very popular and people have been sending in their old mobile phones, printer cartridges and other electronic gadgets to be recycled. So thank you for going green and raising money for the MS Society at the same time.

At the moment the recycling scheme is run as a national fundraising scheme only, so money raised will come to MS National Centre to support nationwide projects and services that assist all affected by MS.

Once the recycling scheme is firmly up and running nationally, we hope to extend the scheme to MS Society branches as a fundraising tool.

In the meantime, keep recycling on behalf of national MS Society projects and services. Here's a reminder of how easy it is:

1. Order a freepost envelope by emailing mssociety@trf-uk.com or calling freephone 0800 091 0696. Or order a bundle of 50 envelopes online at http://shop.mssociety.org.uk.
2. Drop your items into the freepost envelope and add Gift Aid if you'd like to.
3. A donation will be made automatically for all items which are recycled.

For more information on the MS Society recycling scheme, visit our website or email mscorporate@mssociety.org.uk.

Appeals update

During MS Week, supporters across the UK, including members, will receive a fundraising appeal focussing on the MS Register. This will outline the potential benefits of this exciting new project and also explain how people with MS can take part. The appeal will ask supporters to make a single donation or to set up a regular gift. A selection of supporters, excluding members, will also receive a small reminder mailing in June.

In early May, we're also running two appeals focussing on MS research that aim to recruit new supporters. One will be a cold direct mail pack to 250,000 households all over the UK. The other will be a doordrop (unaddressed mail) to over 780,000 households.

You may have seen our appeal in November about the support offered by the MS Society helpline and online forums. The response was fantastic and we're delighted to report that over £200,000 has been raised.

If you have any questions about any of these appeals, please contact Sarah Briggs in the direct marketing team at MS National Centre on sbriggs@mssociety.org.uk or 020 8438 0847 or Hazel Johnstone in the fundraising team in Scotland on hjohnstone@mssocietyscotland.org.uk or 0131 335 4071.

Committee admin

Change of members' details

Please remember to inform the membership team of any changes in a member's details. You can contact the team by email at membership@mssociety.org.uk or by phone on 020 8438 0759.

We send reports to the branch membership contact every month. These highlight recent changes to membership details. Please read these carefully each time. If you notice that we hold incorrect details about a member, such as an incorrect address or phone number, please contact the membership team so we can update the record and let you know where we got this information from.

Annual meeting minutes

As explained in January Teamspirit (page 7) the formal meeting you hold once a year is now known as an annual meeting. This is because now that we are one legal entity, the MS Society is only permitted to have one central AGM.

You annual meeting must be held by 31 May.

You should retain a copy of your annual meeting minutes for your own reference and send a copy to your LSDO, ADO or the MS Support Groups Officer for their information. Please continue to inform the membership team of any committee changes, too, such as new committee members, those who have stepped down or a change in existing contact details. In addition, please notify your LSDO or ADO.

Branch committee updates

In June the membership team will be sending a list of committee members held on our database to each branch. We will be asking branches to check and update the list and return to the membership team.

This is so we can be sure that the details we hold are accurate and completely up to date – so the right volunteers receive Teamspirit and other important information.

You can of course continue to update the membership team throughout the year by email or telephone.

Committee handbook printed!

The new committee handbook, **Making it work**, has now been printed and is being gradually distributed to branches and national support groups. Contact your LSDO, ADO or the MS Support Groups Officer with any questions.

Unrestricted and restricted funds

Many branches and national support groups have similar queries about restricted funds. Here are answers to your most common questions.

What are restricted funds?

Restricted funds can come about in two ways and, according to charity law, need to be treated in a particular way.

1. Where the donor has specified that the donation be used in a particular way (within the Society's objectives). For example, if a donor provides a donation and requests that the branch or group spend the funds on research or physiotherapy. The branch or group must only spend the money on the thing specified by the donor.
2. Where the MS Society has told the donor that a donation will be spent in a particular way. Imagine you specifically ask for donations to purchase a new minibus. A fundraiser may tell donors that their money will be spent on a new minibus, or perhaps puts up a sign at an event reading "all donations raised today will be spent on a new minibus". Making these statements means the funds must be restricted to that item or project.

Money coming to branches from other parts of the MS Society should normally be listed as unrestricted funds, even if it has a specific purpose such as a support grant for an individual. The branch will be advised where a restriction exists on funds received from other parts of the Society.

What are unrestricted funds?

Unrestricted funds are where there are no restrictions on how the funds may be used. Unrestricted donations may be spent on any activity within the MS Society's constitution and rules.

Can a branch choose to restrict funds?

Not after they have been donated – only if you specify to the donor that you are raising restricted funds. Most branches plan or budget what they will spend unrestricted funds on in the future – this is fine. Allocating money in a budget is not the same as 'restricted funds' in a legal sense.

Should I choose to raise restricted funds?

Wherever possible, we recommend you raise unrestricted funds. By keeping funds unrestricted, you have the flexibility to spend them on anything (within the MS Society's objectives), now and in the future.

Restricted funds are governed by charity law, and must be treated in a particular way. So if you are thinking about raising restricted funds, your committee should consider, at a committee meeting, the legal obligations involved. Starting a restricted fund may seem appealing, but can easily become a burden later on.

Consider a committee that has had high demand for branch services and has spent all its unrestricted donations, leaving only a large restricted fund for a new minibus. The committee would have its hands tied, unable to fund essential branch services and general expenses. But if all the donations had been unrestricted, it could continue to fund areas with the most need.

A committee might also raise restricted funds specifically for a piece of equipment. If the appeal is very successful, you might raise more funds than required. But the excess funds would continue to be restricted – and could not be spent on anything else.

Keeping funds unrestricted also simplifies your accounting. Restricted funds require their own accounting, increasing the workload of treasurers.

How to account for restricted funds

When recording your income and expenditure, it is very important to record whether a transaction is restricted or unrestricted, and if restricted, which restricted fund it relates to (such as research or support grants).

On your annual accounts pro forma, branches that have raised or spent restricted funds during the year must complete the restricted funds page and give details of what each fund is for.

How do I avoid restricting funds?

You can keep funds unrestricted by being careful about the words you use when fundraising. Unless you are absolutely certain of how you will use the funds raised, keep your appeal broad, using wording such as “Please support our branch to raise funds for new equipment and other activities”.

The words “and other activities” keep the funds raised unrestricted, meaning you can fund either the new equipment or anything else within the Society’s objectives.

Income generated from a restricted asset

All income arising from an asset purchased with restricted funds is also restricted. This is unless the donor specifically states that the income can be used as unrestricted funds. An example is if you charge people to use a caravan purchased with restricted funds. The income from the caravan service is also restricted. One way to get around this is to ask for a suggested donation instead of charging.

For additional information on restricted funds, please see the **Treasurers’ Handbook**, section 4.2.

For any queries relating to this article, contact Sam Botten on 020 8438 0709 or Sherene Ross on 020 8438 0785, or email financesupport@mssociety.org.uk.

External Audit

Our statutory external audit is in progress and we are currently contacting some branches for additional information requested by the auditors. This is normal auditing procedure.

If you have been asked for information but not yet sent it to the finance team, please do so as soon as possible.

If you have any queries about what we've asked you to provide, please do not hesitate to contact Sam or Sherene at financesupport@mssociety.org.uk.

Thanks to all those who have already provided additional information.

MS Shop

Following the successful launch of the MS Shop last summer, we will collect payments from your Barclays cash pooling accounts shortly for any purchases made in the online shop.

The description on your bank statement will have 'MS SOC M' at the end, and the amount will be the total amount advised when the purchase was made. Contact treasurysupport@mssociety.org.uk with any queries.

For England

Open meetings

Help us shape the future of the MS Society by having your say at one of our open meetings. You will hear about our latest research and activities and be able to take part in discussions on fundraising and campaigns. This will influence where we commit our efforts in the future.

This is also an opportunity to meet our trustees and senior staff and discuss with them what you think the issues are that affect people living with MS.

"A great opportunity for members, staff and trustees to talk openly together" was just one of the positive comments from members who attended last year's open meetings.

See below for dates and locations for the 2011 open meetings in England – and please spread the word to your members. We hope to see you there!

Dates and locations

- London area – Sunday 8 May, central **London** NCVO
- West – Saturday 14 May at the **Birmingham** Metropole, West Midlands
- North – Saturday 21 May at Leyland Hotel, **Preston**, Lancashire
- East – Saturday 11 June, Marriott Hotel, **Huntingdon**, Cambridgeshire
- South – Saturday 18 June at the Hilton, **Maidstone**, Kent

Book your place now!

To book your place at any of the England meetings, please complete the online booking form at www.mssociety.org.uk/news_events/events/open_meetings.html or contact the conferences team on 020 8438 0941.

Set the agenda

Open meetings will be the main place where members' resolutions for the AGM in September 2011 will be discussed and formed. This gives us all the chance to share our views, right across the UK.

If you think you have a topic that could be a resolution let us know. Email Sonja Pinnell at governance@mssociety.org.uk or phone 020 8438 0862.

Become a council member

The England Council is recruiting to six vacancies in Cheshire & Merseyside, East Midlands, Kent, London, Surrey & Sussex and Hertfordshire, Essex & Bedfordshire. See page 9 for more information.

Short Breaks and Activities Fund

From 3 May our new Short Breaks and Activities Fund (SBA) will be available to people affected by MS living in England. Please see page 6.

Relapse Support Service pilot project

by Kathryn Phillpott, Service Development Officer, Sussex Region

Often people with relapsing remitting MS are not eligible for support from social services and have to rely on informal support from family and friends, which can strain relationships. People with MS have reported that better services during a relapse or sudden deterioration would help them remain independent, and most say they would like to be able to plan their care and support in advance.

We have piloted a relapse support service in East Sussex, to better meet these needs among local people with MS. It was developed as a partnership between Eastbourne Branch, East Sussex Adult Social Care, an MS specialist nurse and the local neuro-rehabilitation team.

The pilot in Eastbourne, East Sussex

A small group of people with MS attended a workshop and completed a relapse support plan, which allowed them to plan what support they would need if they had a relapse or exacerbation of their MS.

Each person was given a grant by East Sussex Adult Social Care to spend on putting their plan into effect. As relapses can be hard to define in black and white, people were told they could spend their budget when they "couldn't do today what they could do yesterday". They were given some examples of things they could spend money on to get them started.

The service works on the principle of self-directed support, which is at the heart of personalisation. Self-directed support means recognising that disabled people are the experts in their own lives and have the right to choice about and control over the services that support them. It is a key aspect of personalisation, which is a way of delivering services based on the individual needs of the person receiving services, rather than providing the same services to everyone.

The evaluation

With a £10,000 research grant from the MS Society, we were able to recruit a team from Bournemouth University to see what people thought about the service. They examined how people used the service and the impact it had on their lives.

People spent the grant in really innovative ways, buying things such as:

- services such as cleaning and gardening,
- equipment like walking aids and ceiling fans for keeping cool
- transport, for example taxi fares
- thank you gifts for friends and family who had helped them out

For England

The service was valued by pilot participants, and there was a variety of evidence showing that it helped them feel more in control of managing a relapse or worsening of symptoms, as well as more secure.

One person described their grant as “a tiny pot of sunshine in my pocket”. Another commented that the scheme was: “instilling in people an ability to have more autonomy over their lives at a time when everything just goes to pot.”

In addition, the pilot gathered valuable evidence of people’s needs, which can be used for influencing the future development of local services.

What can your branch do?

Get started by encouraging people to complete a relapse support plan – your Service Development Officer (SDO) will be able to send you an example. The aim is to get people to “think ahead” about what their needs would be if they had a relapse.

Sometimes this can be a difficult thing for people to do, but as one participant reported: “It has made me realise how isolated I am … but when you compare it to the positives the plan has brought me, it far outweighs it.”

You could also:

- work in partnership with your SDO and MS Specialist Nurse to discuss the various ways of supporting people to complete the plans, such as in workshops, forums, or individually
- think about if your local Adult Social Care team could fund grants like in Eastbourne – start by putting this topic on a committee meeting agenda

Help us promote the MS Society Cymru Manifesto

Over the next few weeks all four political parties will start their local campaigns to either win or hold on to the constituency where you live. We would like to use this as an opportunity to raise awareness about MS and campaign about issues that are important to people living with MS.

In March MS Society Cymru launched its manifesto for the Welsh General Election. The document contains a series of asks that we hope next Welsh Government will implement. These include protecting MS nurses, establishing a Bill of Rights for anyone using social care, and reforming social care funding

Contact your AM

You can use our manifesto to make contact with the local candidates and Assembly Members in your area. Are there any local concerns that you would like your AM or prospective candidate to resolve? For example, if there are access problems at a local shopping centre, or your local bus service primarily consists of older ‘high floor’ vehicles that wheelchairs cannot use, why not make contact with the candidates in your area and see what they say?

If you visit www.mssociety.org.uk/wales you will find an easy to use template letter allowing you to write to your AM and explain why you support the manifesto. If you would like contact details for other candidates please contact Joseph Carter on 029 2078 6676.

You can also download a copy of the manifesto, a resource pack full of advice on how to meet your local candidates, a sample letter and press releases on our website.

Open Meeting in Wrexham

Help us shape the future of the MS Society by having your say at our open meeting. You will hear about our latest research and activities and be able to take part in discussions on fundraising and campaigns. This will influence where we commit our efforts in the future.

This year's open meeting in Wales will be held at the Wrexham Ramada Plaza Hotel on Saturday 14 May 2011 at 10.30am.

This is also an opportunity to meet our trustees and senior staff and discuss with them what you think the issues are that affect people living with MS.

"A great opportunity for members, staff and trustees to talk openly together" was just one of the positive comments from members who attended last year's open meetings.

Please spread the word to all your members.

Book your place

To book your place, please complete the online booking form at www.mssociety.org.uk/news_events/events/open_meetings.html or contact the Wales office on 029 2078 6676 or mscymru@mssociety.org.uk.

Set the agenda

Open meetings will be the main place where members' resolutions for the AGM in September 2011 will be discussed and formed. This gives us all the chance to share our views, right across the UK.

If you think you have a topic that could be a resolution, let us know. Email Sonja Pinnell at governance@mssociety.org.uk or phone 020 8438 0862.

For Scotland

Open meeting in Scotland

Help us shape the future of the MS Society by having your say at our open meeting. You will hear about our latest research and activities and be able to take part in discussions on fundraising and campaigns. This will influence where we commit our efforts in the future.

This is also an opportunity to meet our trustees and senior staff and discuss with them what you think the issues are that affect people living with MS.

"A great opportunity for members, staff and trustees to talk openly together" was just one of the positive comments from members who attended last year's open meetings.

This year's open meeting in Scotland will be held on 4 June at the Perth Concert Hall.

Please spread the word to all your members.

Book your place

To book your place please complete the online booking form at www.mssociety.org.uk/news_events/events/open_meetings.html or contact Garry Kinnear on 0131 335 4073 or gkinnear@mssociety.org.uk

Set the agenda

Open meetings will be the main place where members' resolutions for the AGM in September 2011 will be discussed and formed. This gives us all a chance to share our views, right across the UK.

So, if you think you have a topic that could be a resolution let us know. Email Sonja Pinnell at governance@mssociety.org.uk or phone 020 8438 0862.

MS Week in Scotland

We will be doing various things to 'put MS on the map' in Scotland during MS Week (23-29 May). Edinburgh is one of the pilot sites for the MS register project, and we will have a couple of events happening in the capital in MS Week.

During MS Week the Map MS roadshow will visit Edinburgh, where people will be able to share their MS stories. The roadshow will also visit Glasgow in the run-up to MS Week at Breahead Shopping Centre on 13 May. Plus there are plans for a reception at Dynamic Earth on 24 May for major donors.

Your branch pack, sent out to chairs in March, gives you lots of information and ideas to get the most out of MS Week 2011. You can download more copies at www.mssociety.org.uk/scotland.

See page 3 for more on MS Week and putting MS on the map.

Self management courses: taking control of your MS

New courses have been announced for Moray, Kilbirnie, Edderton, Evanton, Musselburgh, Dumbarton, Glenrothes, Dunfermline, Moray, Aberdeen, Stonehaven, Peterhead and Anstruther.

Full details are available on our website at http://www.mssocietyscotland.org.uk/life_with_ms/courses/local_courses.html.

Sharing the Vision road shows

How did they go?

The operations team recently concluded a series of 'Sharing the Vision' road shows across Scotland visiting Edinburgh, Glasgow, Aberdeen, Inverness, Dundee, Borders, and Dumfries and Galloway.

It was great to see so many familiar faces but also to welcome new members and representatives from branches. Participants were given a briefing on recruitment to the Scottish Council, information on the new Short Breaks and Activities Fund, as well as being informed about the new MS support volunteer recruitment and training that will be rolled out later this year (see page 13).

We've also introduced new processes and materials to help branches administer the Support Grant Fund. New application forms, grant-giving guides for branches and other promotional materials are coming soon, and you will be informed as soon as they are available.

If you were unable to attend any of the events and would like more information please get in touch with your Area Development Officer (ADO). They will be able to arrange a presentation on the topics covered at the road shows.

It's important all branches are up to date with the current work and new developments at the MS Society, so our support won't end there. In the next few months we will be contacting you to organise training on grant giving as well as offering assistance with how to get the best out of your fundraising activities.

Short Breaks and Activities Fund

Please remember that if anyone asks you about grants for short breaks, holidays or activities this fund is there for them! The fund is administered by the grants team at the Office for Scotland. You can contact them at grants@mssocietyscotland.org.uk or call 0131 335 4050. See page 6 for more details on the fund.

For Scotland

Committee handbook printed

The new committee handbook, **Making it work**, has now been printed and is being gradually distributed to branches in Scotland. Contact your ADO or Lynda Boyce with any questions (0131 335 4074 or lboyce@mssociety.org.uk).

MS Society Scotland launches Manifesto

The MS Society Scotland's Manifesto for the Scottish elections was launched at the Scottish Parliament on 17 March by Mary Scanlon MSP. The event was attended by members of the MS Society and the following MSPS:

- Elaine Smith
- Jackson Carlaw
- John Wilson
- Tricia Marwick
- Joe Fitzpatrick

The manifesto focuses on three key areas:

- the neurological standards published by NHS Quality Improvement Scotland
- ensuring that research is made a priority
- the personalisation of services that comes with putting people in control.

The MS Society Scotland Manifesto is now available to download from our website, as is our campaign pack, which includes template letters to MSPs and newspapers.

There are lots of ways that branches can help support the manifesto. For more information please contact Jo O'Neill on 0131 335 4061 or email joneill@mssociety.org.uk.

Lothian-wide branch established

This branch will encompass the whole of Edinburgh and Lothians and will provide many new opportunities to become involved in the work of the MS Society.

Previously, there were three separate branches covering the area – Edinburgh City, Lothian (covering East and Midlothian) and West Lothian. The shift to this new structure will simplify and minimise the administration associated with branch activities and ensure a consistent delivery of support across the entire area. There will also be a greater emphasis on forming support or activity groups in each area. This has been endorsed by all existing branch committee members.

For more information and to get involved please contact Area Development Officer Cat Myles on 0131 335 4050 or email cmyles@mssociety.org.uk.

Western Isles MS nurse campaign

The Western Isles is in danger of becoming the only health board area in Scotland without an MS specialist post – but the MS Society's Western Isles Branch is fighting back.

An MS coordinator has been working in the area since 2008 but with budgets being cut this post is under threat. The branch has been campaigning to retain the MS Coordinator and expand the role to ensure that specialist nursing is provided within it.

Their campaign has had significant coverage in the local press and is supported by local MSP Rhoda Grant. A petition backing the campaign has an impressive 4,600 signatures. Recently campaigners presented the petition to the health board, in a meeting described as 'positive'.

MS Society Service Development Manager Andrew Johnston has been working closely with the branch. He explained:

"The need for NHS Boards to drive efficiency savings may mean that in some areas there will be discussions as to whether condition-specific posts such as MS specialists can be sustained. This has been most apparent in Western Isles where the three year joint funding agreement for the MS coordinator post is coming to an end. In November 2010, we heard that the Board would be considering a range of options including moving to a general neurological nurse post."

Since taking up post in 2008 the MS coordinator has been doing valuable work mapping the extent of MS in the Western Isles and providing support to other professionals involved in the care of people with MS.

It had been agreed with the health board that the MS coordinator's role would expand to include vital direct support. Now that other options are being considered, this specialist MS service may not be allowed to develop.

Andrew Johnston said: "We need this post to be secure and afforded the opportunity to develop. Evidence suggests that MS specialists, particularly MS nurses, can help cut down on GP referrals, speed up hospital discharge and prevent admission to hospital, as well as providing high quality advice to people with MS, their families, and other professionals. And because the Western Isles is so isolated from the specialist MS neurological centre in Glasgow, there is extra cause to support the continuation of an MS specialist post."
Keep an eye on our website for the latest news on the campaign.

Scottish Council

Thinking of applying to join our Council? The closing date for applications is 29 April. Please see page 9 for more information and contact details.

Dates for your diary 2011

These events are for you and your members, so please do support them and come along – all are welcome!

Family Information and Fun Day
7 May, 11.00 – 3.00
Dundonald Ice Bowl, Belfast

MS Week Reception at Parliament Buildings – All welcome
23 May
Long Gallery Parliament Buildings, Stormont

Information Day – 18 June
Role of the consultant neurologist and benefits of neuro-physiotherapy
10.30 – 3.00
Craigavon Civic Centre

Fun Day and BBQ – 25 June
11.00 – 3.00
MS Society Resource Centre, Belfast

Information Day – 3 September
Role of the consultant neurologist and benefits of neuro-physiotherapy
10.30 – 3.00
MS Society Resource Centre, Belfast

Information Day – 8 October
Role of the consultant neurologist and benefits of neuro-physiotherapy
10.30 – 3.00
Dunsilly Hotel, Ballymena

MS Society NI Gala Ball 'Step into Christmas' – 26 November
9.00 – late!
Ramada Hotel, Shaws Bridge Belfast

Young People in Focus – 15 December
6.30 – 8.30
MS Society NI Resource Centre, Belfast

If you are interested in attending any of these events please contact Mark Hatte on 028 9080 2802 or mhatte@mssociety.org.uk for further information.

Northern Ireland fundraising events flyer

Our 2011 events leaflet is now available, containing dates for all our fundraising events and activities. It is not an exhaustive listing and we will add new events as the year progresses, but it gives you dates and information for events already planned.

Please bear in mind that if your branch is struggling to come up with a new event or activity or of you have a gap in your calendar, you can encourage members to participate in these events. There really is something for everyone. They can take part and raise funds for your branch – a hassle-free way to fundraise!

The leaflets are being distributed with the NI magazine but if you would like some more to distribute locally, please give us a call on 028 9080 2802.

MS Society Northern Ireland Manifesto

The MS Society Northern Ireland is committed to working with government and policy makers to ensure that the calls contained in our manifesto are acted upon.

People with MS deserve the right to a full life. The three calls in the manifesto are:

- We are calling on the Northern Ireland Executive to commission vital research to establish why Northern Ireland has such a high rate of MS and to develop a regional strategy to assist the 4,000 people diagnosed with MS, their carers and families.
- We are calling on the Northern Ireland Executive to provide investment to support the provision of neuro-physiotherapy for people diagnosed with MS to enable them to live a full life.
- We are calling on the Northern Ireland Executive to ensure there is access to the right drugs and treatments and to provide a range of respite care options.

Support the Manifesto

Everybody can do something to support the manifesto. To find out more contact us on 028 9080 2802.

Families in Focus programme 2011

In the last edition of Teamspirit we announced the Families in Focus programme 2011, a project that focuses on how families with children are affected by MS.

We are delighted to announce that the programme will be launched on Saturday 7 May with a Family Information and Fun Day at Dundonald Ice Bowl. There will be a morning information session followed by lunch, and in the afternoon families will have access to all the facilities at Dundonald including iceskating, ten pin bowling, a children’s adventure playground and crazy golf.

Other events will include a Family Fun Day on Saturday 25 June at the MS Society Resource Centre, Belfast, a children’s residential weekend in August at the Share Centre in Lisnaskea, a family residential weekend and family counselling provision.

Funding for the project has been secured from Lloyds TSB Foundation for NI and Ulster Garden Villages, with further funding applications pending.

This is a really exciting project and we are compiling a list of people who would like to take part. Please do let members know about the project and ask interested families to contact us on 028 9080 2802.

Open meeting in Templepatrick

The Northern Ireland open meeting took place at the Hilton Templepatrick on Saturday 16 April 2011. Look out for a round-up in the next edition of Teamspirit.

New corporate partnerships

The fundraising team is delighted to announce two new corporate partnerships for the MS Society Northern Ireland. We have teamed up with Hughes Insurance for a three-year partnership and have been nominated as charity of the year by the Bar Library Northern Ireland for 2011.

Hughes Insurance is Northern Ireland's largest independent insurance broker and this is a partnership with both the MS Society and Marie Curie Cancer Care.

Tom Mallon, Fundraising Manager, commented: "This is a major corporate partnership and we are delighted that Valerie and her team at Hughes Insurance have chosen to support the MS Society at this level. The funds raised will be used to support our work throughout Northern Ireland."

Our partnership with the Bar Library Northern Ireland is also fantastic news. They raise a significant amount for local charities. We will be working closely with the Bar Library Charity Committee throughout the year. Funds from the Bar Library partnership will be used for important projects like our Family in Focus project in 2012 and beyond.

We are confident that these and other corporate partnerships will not only raise funds but also raise awareness of MS throughout Northern Ireland.

If you know of a company that we could approach about a charity partnership, please get in touch with our fundraising team on 028 9080 2802.

Ladies who Lunch

Ladies, get the handbags out and the gladrags on for an afternoon of fashion and fun – and fantastic food of course! Join us for our 'Ladies who Lunch' event at Malone Golf Club, Belfast on Saturday 21 May.

Guests will enjoy a drinks reception from 12pm followed by a fabulous lunch with a complimentary glass of wine. Lucy Smyth, fashion re-stylist, will be giving frugal fashionistas tips on how to re-fit, re-sculpt and restyle your wardrobe. Elvis will also make an appearance in the guise of Elvis impersonator Andy Rodgers.

Tickets for the event are now available and cost £40. To reserve your tickets and a table please call us on 028 9080 2802.

Classifieds

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

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.

Wheelchair adapted vehicle

Red Seat Terra 903cc available free of charge, first registered in March 1990. Low mileage and excellent condition. Windows on both sides at the rear. Includes aluminium attached ramp that folds up when not in use, four sets of safety belts to secure the wheelchair, plus a seat belt for the person in the wheelchair. Due to changing circumstances the vehicle is no longer of use to the owner and he would like the vehicle to go to someone with MS that could use it. He is based in the London area. For more information please contact Alfie Johnstone on 020 8316 0292.

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 chalet has a master bedroom with en suite shower room, a twin bedded room, bathroom, and lounge/ kitchen area with double fold-out sofa bed. An electric wheelchair and scooter are provided. Further details from Ken Gordon on 01442 243023 or by email 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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Cardiff
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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
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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
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0131 335 4050
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National MS Helpline
0808 800 8000

MS Information Line
020 8438 0799

Respite Care Enquiry Line
020 8438 0925

Membership
020 8438 0759

Local Support Team
020 8438 0924

Events Hotline
0870 241 3565

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