Multiple Sclerosis Society

No. 179 November 2011

Teamspirit

For branch officers and national support group committee members

Welcome to the November edition of Teamspirit.

Contents

Don't forget – the information in the first four 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 **teamspirit@mssociety.org.uk**, phone 020 8438 0741 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/ General funds	Research
Chesterfield & District			£1,500.00
Coalville & District			£2,000.00
Colchester & District	Cambridge Myelin Repair Centre 2011-2015	£3,000.00	
Derby	Fairer Financial Assistance Fund	£1,500.00	
Dudley & District			£2,000.00
Guernsey	Stem Cell Research	£6,000.00	
Maldon & East Essex			£1,500.00
Merton			£2,000.00
Newmarket & District	Cambridge Myelin Repair Centre 2011-2015	£250,000.00	
North Devon			£2,000.00
Nottingham			£540.00
Oldham			£3,000.00
Perthshire & Kinross-Shire	Translational Research Centre Grant	£15,000.00	
Stratford Upon Avon & District	Helpline	£250.00	£500.00
Taunton & District			£5,000.00
Watford	Cambridge Myelin Repair Centre 2011-2015	£2,000.00	
Totals		**£277,750.00**	**£20,040.00**

These are donations recorded in July and August 2011.

News and events

Christmas Opening Hours

The MS Society national offices will be closed over Christmas as follows.

CYMRU and MS NATIONAL CENTRE
Close – Friday 23 December 2011
Re-open – Tuesday 3 January 2012

NORTHERN IRELAND
Close – Thursday 22 December 2011
Re-open – Tuesday 3 January 2012

SCOTLAND
Close – Friday 23 December 2011
Re-open – Wednesday 4 January 2012

Disability Law Service

Could your branch use some legal advice?

The MS Society works with the Disability Law Service (DLS) which is a national charity providing free, confidential legal advice and support. The DLS can help in areas such as social welfare and disability discrimination law for disabled people, their families and carers.

The MS Society has a dedicated MS Legal Officer who can provide basic legal advice and information and can arrange for an appointment with a specialist employment adviser.

Unfortunately the DLS cannot advise on the law in Scotland or Northern Ireland, but if you contact them they can signpost you to appropriate specialists in those areas.

Contact the DLS on telephone/ textphone 020 7791 9800 or via the website **www.dls.org.uk**

Website training – A message for ALL volunteers!

We are producing online training for the new MS Society website. This e-learning contains three sections or modules.

The first, an **introduction to the website**, is suitable for ALL volunteers and shows off some of the features of the new website and how they can help you in your role.

All volunteers can access the e-learning here:

Go to: http://learning.mssociety.org.uk

Click: Login as a guest

Then click: Introduction to the website (for guest users)

Further information for web editors

Two further modules are available for volunteer web editors who contribute content to the site:

- **Writing for the web** covers best practice in web writing and gets you thinking about how people read content online. This will be released during November.

- **Technical training** to help you add and edit content on the website using the new software. We are currently working on this module and should launch it a few weeks after the above 'writing for the web'.

Why e-learning?

Now web volunteers don't need to travel to attend a training session. They can learn at their own pace in the comfort of their own home. Classes can be stopped, saved and re-started, so learners don't have to complete it all in one go. And, the training modules will always be online to refer back to when needed.

We're still here to help! Even though the bulk of the training will be online, the New Media team will always be on hand to help.

What next?

Branch web editors should have received an email with login details for the e-learning. If you are a branch editor and haven't heard from us, please get in touch.

We'll be back in touch when the next two modules are released.

Contact us

Please get in touch if you have problems viewing the module or would like to find out more about getting your branch online. Contact El Jones on **webteam@mssociety.org.uk** or phone 020 8438 0732.

Branchzone

Branchzone is still online and available to use through our new website as a first point of call for any queries and guidance on running your branch.

You can find Branchzone by clicking on the 'I am a Branch volunteer' link on the right hand side of the website's front page. This takes you directly to the Branchzone pages.

If you can't find what you are looking for, please do not hesitate to contact the Volunteering team on 020 8438 0944 or **volunteering@mssociety.org.uk**. The team can also provide copies of any documents you need.

AGM 2011

The MS Society's AGM was held on Saturday 10 September. Members voted on a range of issues including encouraging new support groups, reviewing the helpline service and reviewing Low Dose Naltrexone as a treatment option for MS.

There were six resolutions put before the AGM, three of which were concerning administrative and governance issues, such as the appointment of auditors. The other three resolutions were all passed with big majorities, with more than 4,000 members casting their vote.

For more information about each resolution please have a look on our website or refer to your AGM voting pack.

News and events

Results from resolutions

6.1 annual report and accounts for 2010: noted

6.2 appointing the auditors passed – 98.7% of votes were "for".

6.3 amending the articles of association to bring them into line with current administrative processes passed – 98.1% of votes were "for".

6.4 encouraging new support groups passed – 97.5% of votes were "for".

6.5 reviewing the helpline service passed – 98.2% of votes were "for".

6.6 reviewing LDN as a treatment option for MS passed – 98.1% of votes were "for".

Trustee and national council elections

We're pleased to welcome Sonya Benford as a new trustee. John Miller, Clare Ball, Siobhan Gilmour and Carolyn Heaney were all re-elected to serve a second term of three years.

Details of national council elections can be found on the relevant country's branch information pages.

Members mobilise MPs for party conferences

The policy and campaigns team at the MS Society spent September and October talking to MPs and peers from all three major political parties about welfare, NHS and social care reform.

Almost 700 people wrote to their MP asking them to visit the MS Society's stand, helping us to meet more MPs and peers than ever before.

Many of them told us that they had specifically come to visit us because their constituents had written to them. We also had lots of useful meetings with key politicians, including Minister for Disabled People, Maria Miller.

We have given all MPs who we met the contact details for their local branch.

Read more about what we did and find out if your MP visited our stand at our campaigns blog at: **www.mssociety.org.uk/get-involved/campaigns/campaigns-blog**.

News and events

Legionnaires disease

As you are aware the Society has been carrying out a thorough review of both its 'risk' and 'health and safety' policies. This is to bring the policies in line with directives set out by the Health and Safety Executive.

If a branch is providing transport for the use of people affected by MS, it is important to be aware of the recent findings in regard to Legionnaires' disease.

It has come to the attention of the Society through the Health Protection Agency that there is a potential risk to all branches that own a mini bus, wheelchair carrying vehicle or van. This risk centres on the management of screen wash and the frequency at which it is changed. Without this Legionella bacteria could grow in the stagnant water of the windscreen wiper fluid reservoir.

Recommendations

All branches that own vehicles should ensure that screen wash is always placed in their vehicles rather than relying on water. The screen wash should be used in line with the manufacturer's instructions.

Branches should also ask members to take the same action with private vehicles.

Thank you

Thank you to all the branches that have provided us with your branch committee details after a mailing request from us to update our database. We have received responses from over half our branches.

If you have not yet updated your committee details but would like to, please contact our membership team on 020 8438 0759 or email **membership@mssociety.org.uk**

Branch emails

We had hoped to make branch emails available to all branches by the beginning of 2011 following a successful pilot in the North West. However, to enable us to do this more changes to our Information Communication and Technology (ICT) infrastructure are needed. We will continue to keep you updated on our progress with this project in 2012.

Cambridge Campaign launches

Myelin repair fundraising campaign launches

On the same weekend the clocks went back (mid October) we launched a fundraising appeal for a five year research project to raise money for myelin repair. The work, carried out at the MS Society's Cambridge Centre for Myelin Repair with support from the Edinburgh Centre for Translational Research, holds the potential of finding a treatment that could ultimately turn back time, and repair the damage caused by MS.

Exciting breakthroughs have been made at the Cambridge and Edinburgh Centres in recent years, and researchers now believe the world's first treatment to stop or even reverse the damage caused by MS is possible in the next 10-15 years. This work gives hope to everyone living with MS around the world as well as future generations.

At Cambridge, the MS Society funded the first stage of the team's research, investing £1.5 million of donated income and realising this success. Now a further £2.1m needs to be raised to allow the team to build on recent breakthroughs and then work with the Edinburgh Centre for Translational Research to ultimately make myelin repair therapies a reality.

Bernard Gorman from Hertfordshire was diagnosed with primary progressive MS in 2006. He was part of the team that recommended funding for the second stage of the Cambridge Centre, and spoke alongside Robin Franklin at the Cambridge Science Festival earlier this year:

"This work means a lot to me. It's a very exciting programme of research and I think we're on the cusp of a big breakthrough in the way MS is treated. My hope is that the research being done there will lead to treatments that are effective for people with all types of MS, including people like me who have primary progressive MS.

"Things don't happen overnight and a lot more work is needed. But knowing that a lot of individuals are working really hard to beat MS really helps me stay positive."

You and branch members can look in the latest edition of Research Matters for more information and details on the Cambridge and Edinburgh Centre teams and their work.

As you can see although significant breakthroughs have been made more needs to be done, and so we are appealing for funds from many different supporters.

Help turn discoveries into treatments by speaking to your Local Support Development Officer / Area Development Officer or visiting **www.mssociety.org.uk/hope** for more information.

MS Life 2012 – Put the dates in your diaries now!

From 14 April - 15 April 2012 the largest event in Europe for people affected by MS will be heading to Manchester Central.

We would like to encourage as many people to attend as possible and we need your help!

So how can your branch help?

- Promote the event to your members and within your local area using your branch newsletters and at local events.
- It's not too early to get the best deals on travel and accommodation. Please email mslife@mssociety.org.uk for more details.

- Perhaps your branch could organise a minibus to transport local members up to Manchester.
- We also need your input on the event itself. Do you have any great workshop ideas? Or perhaps a research topic you'd like to hear more about? Maybe an exhibitor you'd like to see? If so let us know!

The MS Life team is able to provide copy for articles and newsletters, and we also have an exciting range of promotional materials available including pens, postcards, posters and booking forms. Please email **mslife@mssociety.org.uk** for more details.

To find out more please visit or to submit your suggestions please visit: **http://www.mssociety.org.uk/ms-events/2011/05/ms-life-2012**

Changes to MS Society staff

New starters

Katie Dorff,
Volunteer Development Officer (VDO)

Asha Kaur,
Policy and Campaigns Researcher

Sarah Mehta,
Research Communications Officer

Claire Nurden, Policy and Campaigns Researcher (social care and welfare)

Jenny Pearce,
Community Fundraising Manager

Albert Pun, Financial Accounts Supervisor

Karen Tucker, Service Development Officer

Mita Vaghji, Community Fundraiser

Goodbyes

Lynne Brown, Programme Lead, Nursing

Belinda Goodman,
PA to Head of Volunteering, MSNC

Jane Haines, Area Manager (South)

Michelle Procopi, Executive Assistant to Director of Operations

Jennifer Ray,
PA to Head of Care Services, MSNC

Maternity leave

Esther O'Brien,
Service Development Officer (SDO)

Gulen Petty,
Community Fundraising Manager

Interested in receiving Teamspirit by email?

The MS Society now offers Teamspirit by email. If you would like to help us save money and are happy to receive your copy of Teamspirit by email instead of in the post, please do let us know by contacting **teamspirit@mssociety.org.uk** or 020 8438 0944.

New editions from the MS Society

MS Essentials 16: Support and planning ahead – for people severely affected by MS
(Third Edition July 2011)

A new edition of the booklet formerly called *Support for people severely affected by MS* has been published. It includes information about the role of 'holistic' palliative care for managing MS at different times. A copy of this booklet was sent to all branches in August.

Other new editions on their way are:

MS Essentials 09: Benefits and MS
(Seventh Edition September 2011)

MS Essentials 14: Fatigue
(Seventh Edition August 2011)

Sample copies of these booklets will be sent to branches at the end of October.

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 our information team (details below).

If you do not have internet access you can telephone the orderline on 0300 1000 801. Alternatively you can contact our information team by email **infoteam@mssociety.org.uk** or call 020 8438 0799 (weekdays 9am-4pm).

Discontinued factsheet

The MS Essentials factsheet *When someone dies* has been discontinued. The information formerly covered by the factsheet is available in the publication *Caring for someone with MS*. Further information is also available from organisations such as Dying Matters and Age UK.

MS Society publication highly commended by BMA

Work and MS – for employees and employers has been highly commended in the 2011 BMA Patient Information Awards.

This edition, published in December 2010, includes a toolkit of tables, guides and questionnaires for people to help manage the effects of MS at work.

Established in 1997, the Awards aim to encourage the production and dissemination of accessible, well-designed and clinically balanced patient information.

MS Society partner with Vitalise to provide funding for short breaks

A new partnership between the MS Society and UK charity Vitalise will enable even more people affected by MS to have a short break. Vitalise will match-fund grants from the Society's Short Breaks & Activities (SBA) Fund, increasing the amount of funding available through the fund.

Vitalise provide short breaks and respite care for people with disabilities and their carers. Funding will be provided from its Joan Brander Memorial Fund, which already provides grants towards the price of short breaks for thousands of people a year.

Vitalise have three centres with 24 hour care on-call at centres in Southport, Southampton and Chigwell, Essex.
They provide excursions to some of the best attractions in the country and provide entertainment in the evening. In addition to this, professional staff and volunteers also provide companionship and assistance.

All centres have licensed bars, provide sightseeing breaks and there are weeks themed around special interests such as live music, history and heritage, holistic therapies, youth weeks, wildlife and culture to name just a few. The focus is firmly on relaxation and fun. Guests can come by themselves, with a friend or even come as part of a group and enjoy a friendly welcome at the centre.

Vitalise has availability and funding up until the end of January 2012 so if you need an autumn/winter break don't delay!

For more information about Vitalise centres, please see the Vitalise website: **www.vitalise.org.uk** or call their bookings and information line on: 0303 303 0145.

To apply for funding to stay at one of the Vitalise centres fill in one of our SBA fund application forms or contact our grants team on 020 8438 0700 or **email grants@mssociety.org.uk**

Please see the September issue of teamspirit for more information about the SBA Fund.

New guide to give more choice and control

The MS Society has launched a new publication *Short Breaks: A guide to short breaks and respite for people affected by MS* which offers information on a wide range of options for people considering short breaks and respite care.

People living with MS have overwhelmingly told us they want more choice and control over where and how they access short breaks and respite, including more holiday-style breaks.

This guide explains how to get funding for a short break, the standards you can expect, who can help you get there, hire equipment and how to get insurance.

It's an essential read for anyone affected by MS who is thinking about taking a break, whether this is in the form of a holiday, respite care or regular activity.

It's also a useful resource for volunteers that can help guide enquiries about short breaks and respite in the UK and abroad. We'd appreciate your help to widen its reach by promoting it in any local sub-groups, support and network groups and ensuring all volunteers know how they can get a copy.

In September we sent sample copies to support officers and support volunteers across the UK. To download the guide or order more printed copies from our online shop, please visit **www.mssociety.org.uk/resources.**

For further support, contact our Short Breaks Information Officer on 020 8438 0799 or email **respitecare@mssociety.org.uk.**

The MS Society regrettably announced in October that it would be closing Brambles respite care centre in Surrey in November and Helen Ley respite care centre in January, unless a viable offer came forward in the meantime to take over running the centres. Full details of the announcement are on the MS Society website.

Given that the situation remains changeable, it is impossible to provide up to date information via Teamspirit, so please check the website or speak to your local staff member for the latest information.

Fundraising

Cake Break 2012

Thank you to everyone who supported Cake Break this year. We had a fantastic response and have raised an amazing £215,000 so far! Thank you to all the branches around the UK who got involved.

Next year's Cake Break will take place on Friday 4 May 2012 – make sure you put this date in your diary!

In 2012 we would like more branches to get involved so we will be offering branches more support from staff at the Society to help raise the profile of Cake Break in your area.

You will be able to register online from January 2012 and download all the materials you need from our website at **www.mssociety.org.uk/cakebreak.**

We will also have hard copies of all our materials available for order from our Community Fundraising team based at the MS National Centre.

If you have any queries or would like more information about Cake Break please contact Mita Vaghji Community Fundraiser on 020 8438 0737 or email **cakebreak@mssociety.org.uk.**

Appeals update

You may have seen our fundraising appeal in early September focusing on grants. We have so far raised over £15,000 and donations are still coming in. Thank you to all members who have made a contribution.

Three appeal letters are going out UK wide asking for support in research.

We have two appeals going to people who may have not had contact with the Society. One appeal being sent in October tells the story of Faye, a young woman who was diagnosed with MS when she was pregnant with twins. This appeal asks for help to fund research to understand MS even further.

Our final fundraising appeal will focus on myelin repair and will be sent to our members and supporters across the UK in early November. This will focus on myelin repair and will be a part of a larger fundraising campaign at the Society. Details of this campaign can be found on page 6.

A short reminder mailing will then be sent in early December to a small number of our most active donors.

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, or Hazel Johnstone in the fundraising team at the Scotland office on **hjohnstone@mssociety.org.uk** or 0131 335 4071.

Fundraising

Festive partnership with WH Smith

Encourage your family and friends to go and buy their Christmas cards from leading retailer WH Smith. The retailer has chosen the MS Society as one of their partners for their charity boxed Christmas card range.

A box of single-design Christmas cards for the Society is priced at £4.99 for a box of 10 cards. The MS Society will receive a donation of 20 per cent (excluding VAT) for each box sold and this will support national projects and key services.

The Christmas cards will be available in store from 10 October onwards so help spread the word about this festive partnership.

A Christmas catalogue to beat MS

You can donate to your local branch when you make a purchase from the MS Society’s Christmas catalogue for gifts, cards and stocking fillers.

Request your FREE copy of the MS Society's Christmas catalogue by calling 0844 557 5382, or you can order online on **www.mssshop.co.uk**.

For your branch to get a 30 per cent donation from your catalogue purchase, make sure to use your ‘branch media code’. You can request this code from your local branch or by contacting **marketing@mssociety.org.uk**.

Thank you. Together we can beat MS this Christmas.

Increase the value of your membership

Every day at the MS Society we strive to reduce our administration costs so we can invest more funds in treatments and services for people with MS and their carers.

This year you can pay your yearly membership fee by Direct Debit to significantly reduce our administration costs and you can ask other members to do the same.

Direct Debit payments are safe, automatic and really cost effective.

For more information call 020 8438 0759 or email us at **membership@mssociety.org.uk**.

If you are not already a member you can join the Society on our website at **www.mssociety.org.uk/joinus**.

England Council election results

The MS Society's AGM was held on Saturday 10 September. As well as voting on a range of issues, members also elected national council members.

England Council members are elected by region. This year there were vacancies in six regions: East Midlands; Herts, Beds, Essex; London; Surrey & Sussex, Cheshire & Merseyside and Kent regions. Unfortunately there were no candidates for the Cheshire & Merseyside and Kent regions.

The following members were elected to England Council:

Debbie Alexander – Surrey & Sussex
Jim McGown – East Midlands
Sarah Schol – Herts, Essex, Beds
Cindy Fischer – London

The results were announced on the day of the AGM apart from the London election. Due to an administrative error, members in London had to be re-balloted and that result came in on 28 September.

The England Council works on behalf of people affected by MS in England. Council members work alongside the staff team in England, as well as local MS Society branches, to beat MS. They are accountable to the Society's UK Board of Trustees.

The new Council members will take up their posts in January 2012, after a period of training. For more information about the new council members, please visit our website, where you can read individual pre-election statements or refer to your AGM voting pack.

The results of all resolutions voted on at the AGM can be found in the News and Events section.

MS Society Cymru Council elections

The MS Society's AGM was held on Saturday 10 September. As well as voting on a range of issues, members also elected national council members.

The following members were re-elected to the MS Society Cymru Council:

Mark Williams
Marion Davies
Paul Pavia
Keith Rollinson

The Cymru Council work on behalf of people affected by MS in Wales. Council members work alongside the staff team in Cymru, as well as local MS Society branches to beat MS. They are accountable to the Society's UK Board of Trustees.

For more information about the new council members, please visit our website, where you can read individual pre-election statements or refer to your AGM voting pack.

The results of all resolutions voted on at the AGM can be found in the News and Events section.

Celebrate Christmas with the MS Society

Are you organising any Christmas events? Do you need help?

Following the success of last year we are looking for volunteers to organise Christmas parties across Wales for their friends and family to raise money for the MS Society.

With just over six weeks to go until Christmas many of us are now turning our minds towards the festive season with the slight air of panic that often accompanies the soon-to-be Christmas shopper.

However, for some people living with MS, Christmas can be a very difficult time whether coming to terms with a new diagnosis or wondering if they will feel well enough to participate in celebrations.

We have developed a Christmas Fundraising Pack that we hope will raise money to support our helpline.

The Christmas Fundraising Pack includes advice on organising Christmas cake sales, organising parties and even how to organise your own pantomime.

If you would like further information then please ring Iestyn Evans, Fundraising Manager on 029 2078 6676 or email **ievans@mssociety.org.uk**

Together we are stronger

Are you involved in a local neurological alliance? MS Society Cymru is a member of the Wales Neurological Alliance (WNA), which brings together 27 neurological charities (Parkinson's UK, MND Association, Stroke Association etc) to work together to benefit all of our members.

There are currently eight active local alliances across Wales, bringing together branches and support groups of the WNA charities. Many MS Society Cymru branches are involved in their local alliance, but not all. By working together you could support each others' fundraising, share best practice and have a louder voice in your local area.

The local alliances are: Montgomeryshire Association of Neurological Groups & Organisations (MANGO); Neurological Alliance Wrexham (NAW); Long Term Condition Alliance Ynys Mon & North Gwynedd; South Gwynedd Long Term & Chronic Conditions Alliance; South West Wales Neurological Alliance; West Wales Neurological Alliance; and RCT & Merthyr Chronic Conditions Management Focus Group.

If you are interested in getting involved in a local neurological alliance please contact Ian Folks on 020 8438 0854 or email **ievans@mssociety.org.uk.**

Help us beat MS with carrier bags

With the introduction of a carrier bag levy by the Welsh Government from 1 October, every business in Wales will now charge 5p to customers for a carrier bag, which is required to be donated to a charity of choice.

This is a great opportunity for the MS Society to get out and talk to local businesses about which charity they are donating to and encourage them to choose the MS Society as their charity of choice.

If you can help and have a business interested in supporting the Society, please contact Iestyn Evans on 029 2078 6676 or email **ievans@mssociety.org.uk.**

New approach to MS support being rolled out in Wales

At the start of 2012 there will be an exciting change to the way local support is provided as we look to establish new MS Support teams in branch areas across Wales.

This new approach will offer the opportunity to become part of a team delivering support with a variety of roles, which can be tailored to utilise the skills and experience of volunteers.

For Wales

What will change?

Adopting a team approach for Support Volunteers will provide an improved range of skills and/or geographical locations and an environment where volunteers can learn from and support each other and share the responsibilities of delivering this very important service.

What will the role involve?

There will be an induction and four-day training programme available to Support Volunteers. The training will be held over a period of two to four months which volunteers will be asked to make a commitment to attend. No one will be asked to take on more tasks than they feel comfortable with. Ongoing support forums will also take place to allow support volunteers to share their knowledge and experiences.

The new MS Support team roles and the training provided should prove an asset to people looking for a challenge and who would like to ‘make a difference’, with the added benefit of learning new skills that may benefit future employment opportunities.

How do I apply?

If you would like to take on a new challenge to help support people living with MS, then please contact Sue Jones on **sjones@mssociety.org.uk** or call 020 8438 0981 for more information. We anticipate that we will hold interviews during March/April 2012.

For Scotland

New MS Society Scotland Council elected

At the MS Society's AGM on 10 September 2011, members in Scotland elected eight council members who will now form the MS Society Scotland Council. We are delighted to welcome our new council members to the Society:

Bryan Alexander
Ann Barnes
Judy Eglington
Michelle Logie
Linda Mason
Hew Mathewson
Angela McCormack
Angela Monteith

The MS Society Scotland Council will work on behalf of people affected by MS in Scotland. They are accountable to the Society's UK Board of Trustees. Council members will work alongside the staff team in Scotland, as well as local MS Society branches, to beat MS.

Council members will take up their posts in January 2012, after a period of training. For more information about the new council members, please visit our website, where you can read individual pre-election statements.

The results of all resolutions voted on at the AGM can be found in the News and Events section.

Grants training

Grants training took place for branches across Scotland following a review of our grants system which looked at how the MS Society could improve and deliver a better service with branches.

The training primarily dealt with the processes involved in applications for Individual Support Grants, but also covered the Society's other grant awards, such as the Short Breaks and Activities Fund.

We were delighted that over 80 branch committee members attended the training. Questionnaires completed before and after the training showed that all those who completed the training improved their knowledge of the grants available in Scotland.

Your feedback:

"Very good. Feel plenty of support out there but more adequately equipped to process applications now."

"Interesting and informative day. Will make the grant process a lot clearer. Thank you."

"Productive being able to see the potential to support other people."

During the training we collated queries about grants and will soon be providing a Q&A to answer your questions. In the next twelve months we plan to put into place a feedback session to support branches by offering the opportunity to discuss systems etc.

If your branch has not yet attended training, please get in touch with our grants team as grants should not be processed by a branch until training has taken place.

If you have any queries relating to grants then please don't hesitate to contact the grants team in Scotland on 0131 335 4081 or email **grantsscotland@mssociety.org.uk**. Alternatively you can get in touch with your Area Development Officer.

Edinburgh Marathon 2012 – an opportunity to reach new donors

The weather may be getting colder and the nights drawing in but many marathon runners will be starting to think about possible races for 2012. Ballot entries for the Edinburgh Marathon Festival 2012 opened on 1 September making this the ideal time to start recruiting runners to raise money for your branch in 2012.

In 2011, 72 MS Society runners took part in the Edinburgh Marathon Festival events and raised over £33,000 to help people living with MS in Scotland. The runners, ranging in age from 21 to 59, raised an average of £461 each.

There are two ways a runner can enter the Marathon. Runners can apply for a ballot place directly from Edinburgh Marathon. These places are open until mid-December and do not cost branches anything. Alternatively, runners can apply for a charity place from the MS Society. These applications must be submitted by mid-April and cost £140. This cost can be taken out of the fundraiser's sponsor money when it is passed back to the Branch after the event.

The Scotland office will ensure that all branch runners have everything they need, including a running pack, t-shirt and sponsor forms. After the big event, monies raised will be passed back to the branch that recruited the runner, minus the entry fee for any charity place runners.

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 **fharvey@mssociety.org.uk**

New approach to MS support being rolled out in Scotland

At the start of 2012 there will be an exciting change to the way local support is provided as we look to establish new MS Support teams in branch areas across Scotland.

This new approach will offer the opportunity to become part of a team delivering support with a variety of roles, which can be tailored to utilise the skills and experience of volunteers. Throughout October we have been holding information sessions in Scotland for branches and new volunteers to explain the new approach.

What will change?

Adopting a team approach for Support Volunteers will provide an improved range of skills and/or geographical locations and an environment where volunteers can learn from and support each other and share the responsibilities of delivering this very important service.

What will the role involve?

There will be an induction and four-day training programme available to Support Volunteers. The training will be held over a period of two to four months which volunteers will be asked to make a commitment to attend. No one will be asked to take on more tasks than they feel comfortable with. Ongoing support forums will also take place to allow support volunteers to share their knowledge and experiences.

The new MS Support team roles and the training provided should prove an asset to people looking for a challenge and who would like to 'make a difference', with the added benefit of learning new skills that may benefit future employment opportunities.

How do I apply?

If you would like to take on a new challenge to help support people living with MS, then please contact our Volunteer Development Manager, Lynda Boyce on 0131 335 4050 or email **lboyce@mssociety.org.uk**.

Mulled wine and mince pies for MS

Now is the time to start planning your Christmas activities! Why not consider holding a mulled wine and mince pies night to raise money for your branch?

All you need to do is invite members, family, friends and colleagues along and ask them to make a donation in exchange for a warming glass of mulled wine and a tasty mince pie. For more information please contact the Scottish fundraising team on 0131 335 4050 or **msfundraising@mssociety.org.uk**.

Change to MS Society Scotland emails

All MS Society Scotland email addresses will now follow the format **jblog@mssociety.org.uk.**

Our general enquiries email address has also changed to **msscotland@mssociety.org.uk**. Can you ensure that you amend your records?

Don't worry if you have printed materials that use old email addresses – any messages sent to these will be re-directed.

For Northern Ireland

Northern Ireland Council

The MS Society's AGM was held on Saturday 10 September. As well as voting on a range of issues, members also elected national council members.

The following members were elected to Northern Ireland Council:

Pat Crossley

Derek Follis

The Northern Ireland Council works on behalf of people affected by MS in Northern Ireland. Council members will work alongside the staff team in Northern Ireland, as well as local MS Society branches, to beat MS. They are accountable to the Society's UK Board of Trustees.

The new Council members will take up their posts in January 2012, after a period of training. For more information about the new council members, please visit our website, where you can read individual pre-election statements or refer to your AGM voting pack.

The results of all resolutions voted on at the AGM can be found in the News and Events section.

Treasurer training

Treasurer training to provide new or existing treasurers with training on branch finance procedures will take place on Tuesday 22 November 2011. This will also be an opportunity to answer any questions treasurers might have.

Training will be held at the Resource Centre, 34 Annadale Avenue at 10.30am. Please let your Area Development Officer know if you are attending.

Counselling service

A counselling service, available to anyone affected by MS, is now being held every Tuesday and Friday due to high demand.

The service is held at the MS Society Resource Centre, 34 Annadale Avenue, Belfast BT7 3JJ every Friday and from Wilson House Day Centre, Raceview Road, Ballymena every Tuesday afternoon.

To make an appointment please contact the MS Society Resource Centre on 028 9080 2802. Please make your members aware of this service.

New approach to MS support being rolled out in Northern Ireland

At the start of 2012 there will be an exciting change to the way local support is provided as we look to establish new MS Support teams in branch areas across Northern Ireland.

This new approach will offer the opportunity to become part of a team delivering support with a variety of roles, which can be tailored to utilise the skills and experience of volunteers.

We held our first event on 14 September to provide six branches with information on this programme. The representatives who attended the event will now assess the needs of their local branch area with their respective committees. It is hoped that a second event will take place in November for branches who were unable to attend.

What will change?

Adopting a team approach for Support Volunteers will provide an improved range of skills and/or geographical locations and an environment where volunteers can learn from and support each other and share the responsibilities of delivering this very important service.

What will the role involve?

There will be an induction and four-day training programme available to Support Volunteers. The training will be held over a period of two to four months which volunteers will be asked to make a commitment to attend. No one will be asked to take on more tasks than they feel comfortable with. Ongoing support forums will also take place to allow support volunteers to share their knowledge and experiences.

The new MS Support team roles and the training provided should prove an asset to people looking for a challenge and who would like to ‘make a difference’, with the added benefit of learning new skills that may benefit future employment opportunities.

How do I apply?

If you would like to take on a new challenge to help support people living with MS, then please contact the Northern Ireland development team on 028 9080 2802 or email **nidevelopmentteam@mssociety.org.uk**.

Family in Focus

Young people with someone in their family affected by MS attended a summer camp in August and took part in a range of activities with others in a similar situation.

The two days focused on working together as a team and building relationships. The group made mosaics of what MS meant to each of them and also developed a logo for the ‘family in focus’ project.

For Northern Ireland

Time to Talk

Time to Talk, a support programme launched in September, will now offer families affected by MS counselling to help them deal with the emotional impact of the diagnosis of MS.

In this programme run by Relate Northern Ireland, a counsellor will work with each person to tailor support best suited to them. It is completely confidential.

The programme is available throughout Northern Ireland so if you are interested in accessing support from the programme you can contact Relate Northern Ireland directly on 028 9032 3454 to make an appointment.

Please remember to say that you are accessing the service through the MS Society and your appointment will be fast tracked.

Nominate a young person making a difference

You can nominate a young person whom you know is making a difference to a family affected by MS so they can be acknowledged at a special presentation ceremony on Thursday 15 December.

They might be a young carer who helps with household tasks such as shopping and cooking, looks after brothers and sisters or helps with personal care such as washing and toileting. It may be that they provide companionship and emotional support.

We will be holding the presentation ceremony at the Resource Centre, 34 Annadale Avenue on Thursday 15 December at 6.30pm.

If you would like to nominate a young person please contact your Area Development Officer or alternatively email us on **nidevelopmentteam@mssociety.org.uk** to request a nomination form.

Grand Christmas raffle

Tickets will soon be distributed for our ‘Grand Christmas raffle’, a raffle that provides branches with an opportunity to raise additional funds in the run up to Christmas.

Books of tickets will be available from the fundraising team from 1 November and the draw takes place on **Friday 16 December** at our festive ‘Big Breakfast’ being held at the Resource Centre.

You can order your raffle book from Samantha Creighton on 028 90802802 or screighton@mssociety.org.uk or if you are already a raffle supporter and member, tickets will be sent direct to you.

Our first prize is a fantastic Samsung 40” LCD TV with Blu-ray, 3D Disc / DVD player, second prize is a Donegal weekend break for two people. Our third prize is a luxury spa break with dinner and overnight accommodation for two people.

For Northern Ireland

MS Society gala ball – 'step into Christmas'

We are delighted to announce that our line up for our 2011 Gala Ball which takes place at the Ramada Hotel in Belfast on Saturday 26 November will include May McFettridge. May is Northern Ireland's very own queen of comedy and a superstar in her own right.

Guests will enjoy a champagne reception on arrival followed by a scrumptious dinner before being entertained by May. Sure to have guests dancing is the outstanding 'Professionals'. The Professionals were a massive hit at the 2010 event and the band is back by popular demand.

The 'Ball' is a fantastic night out where so many branches come together for many people affected by MS.

Tables/tickets are just £50 per ticket or £500 for a table of 10. Call us to discuss our special early bird booking rate for branches on 028 9080 2802 or email **fundraising@mssocietyni.co.uk.**

Fire walk for MS challenge

How far would you go to help beat MS?

A unique opportunity to conquer your fears and walk barefoot across 20 feet of burning embers – unharmed!! Yes, walk across burning hot coals! Our Fire Walk for MS will take place at the Resource Centre in Belfast on Friday 2 December.

We ask all participants to pay a registration fee of £20 and pledge to raise a minimum of £100 in sponsorship.

If you or someone you or someone you know would like to take part to raise funds for your branch call us on 028 9080 2802 or email **fundraising@mssocietyni.co.uk.**

MS Santa dash & dander

Our annual dash & dander will get the festive season underway with a two mile dash or dander as part of your branch Christmas activities.

The dash & dander will take place at Stormont Estate, Belfast Saturday 10 December at 10.30 am.

If you are one of the first hundred to register, you will be provided with a Santa suit.

Don't delay contact our fundraising team on 028 9080 2802 to pick up your registration packs.

Carols at Stormont

We are hosting a carol concert in the Great Hall at Parliament Buildings, Stormont on Thursday 1 December at 7:30pm. If you are interested in finding out more please contact the Resource Centre on 028 9080 2802.

Classifieds

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

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 a level development with easy access to nearby supermarket. From £195 per week for 4 people. For more visit **www.canariesvilla.co.uk** or contact Graham and Alison Adgie on 0153 973 1835 or **gilcruce@talktalk.net.**

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 Richard Smith, telephone 07709 235729.

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

MS Society
MS National Centre
372 Edgware Road
London
NW2 6ND
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.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 4081
grantsscotland@mssociety.org.uk
(Scotland)

National MS Helpline
0808 800 8000

MS Information Line
020 8438 0799

Membership
020 8438 0759

Volunteering
020 8438 0944

Fundraising
0870 241 3565

Teamspirit
MS National Centre
372 Edgware Road
London
NW2 6ND
020 8438 0944
teamspirit@mssociety.org.uk