

SWINDON MS & NEURO THERAPY CENTRE

Supporting those with Neurological Conditions



Winter 2020 Newsletter

WELCOME

Welcome to our Winter 2020 newsletter.

As usual, there is much to inspire us in the pages that follow. Fundraising activity continues apace – and as those of us who attended the AGM at the end of November heard, we've had a record year for fundraising with some fantastic efforts by so many of our wonderful members, volunteers, staff and supporters. You'll read more about some of that activity in this newsletter – and I'm sure that you'll join me in *being* inspired and sending a HUGE 'thank you' to everyone who helps to generate the funds that we need to continue to thrive as a charity.

Talking of inspiration, the AGM always provides that – but none more so than this year. We were fortunate to secure the speaking talents of Mark Lever, Amanda's husband and recently appointed CEO of HelpForce, an amazing organisation working in partnership with NHS hospital trusts to help fund and transform volunteering in and around hospital settings. If you didn't get a chance to come to the AGM, find someone who did and ask them to tell you more about Mark's inspiring talk. He recognised something that we often talk about – the power of volunteering and the benefits of people seeking to work together to enable best possible outcomes for one another. Huge thanks to Mark for his contribution to our AGM – and even bigger ones to ALL our volunteers, staff and supporters who enable us to come together and deliver the brilliant outcomes that are our hallmark.

Alongside an otherwise comprehensive AGM, I forgot to do one important thing – to give Sarah Heppenstall a chance to promote the newly established "Swindon Community Lottery". But Sarah doesn't forget stuff as I do! She talks about this new fundraising opportunity in the pages that follow. And there is much more for you to read about and be inspired by too.

Please enjoy the newsletter. Take care of yourselves, have a Happy Christmas and here's to a New Year in which we can continue to inspire one another.

Best Wishes

Tim Culling

(Chair of Trustees)

MEMBER NEWS

People Update

We are pleased to Welcome Debbie McKenzie who started at the end of October as our Finance and Administration Officer. If you haven't already met her and wish to come and say hello, you will find her in the office everyday (except Tuesday).

We also welcome Rich Jones and Abby Jones (no relation) who have joined our physiotherapy team. Rich will be running the Wednesday morning exercise class, held in the studio gym followed by assisting Carol in the upstairs gym for the rest of the morning. Abby will be helping Carolyn in the gym on Friday mornings and will also fill in for Sarah H by running her Friday exercise class as required. We look forward to them joining us.

Ann Blundell has now completed her training and is now a fully signed up member of the Saturday oxygen team. Arthur Pinn and Shirley Bowman also completed their training earlier in the year and are now part of the oxygen teams that run on Thursday morning and Thursday evening.

We also welcomed Chloe, Emma and Sam who are all volunteering and having the opportunity of gaining some work experience at the same time.

Welcome to all of you!

For the attention of Members:

Just a reminder that it is that time again and the annual membership of £20 is due in January. If you have joined the centre since 1 October 2019, you don't need to pay again until next year.

If you wish to continue to be a member of the centre, please could you complete a membership form and send a cheque or pay directly into our Bank Account: HSBC Bank Sort Code 40-43-41 Account No 51363697 quoting '2020 Membership'.

CHRISTMAS ACTIVITIES

HANDMADE FAIR

We had another successful Craft Fair in November which raised £819.81 for the Centre. The 6 outside stalls brought a range of well received goods and our own craft table sold an amazing £174.25 of items. Thankyou to all our craft donators who each year supply us with a range of good quality items. And a big thank you to all those that volunteered on the day to help make this event a success. Good Gym Swindon came to help on the door and with tidying up afterwards which we are very grateful for.

CHRIST CHURCH CHRISTMAS MARKET

We attended the long running Christmas Charity Market alongside many other Swindon Charities again this year. Our prime location by the door was great until the frostbite hit. We had a successful day and sold £183.35

OTHER EVENTS

We also took our craft table and raffle tickets to 3 other places. Wakefield House at Nationwide, Bath Road Methodist Church Fair and Thames Water. These 3 events raised a further £128.75 for the Centre.

WREATHS AND TABLE DECORATIONS

Thank you to Debbie Reid who made and donated table decorations and Wreaths for us to sell. Her generous donation made £400 for the Centre.



CHRISTMAS RAFFLE AND PARTY

Our Christmas party was enjoyed by many of us and was a fun time to come together and join in with some festivities. Our bring and share buffet as always under a heaving table and doggy bags were taken home plus visitors to the centre over the following days enjoyed sausage rolls and mince pies. We would like to thank the team from Zurich Investments who provided time to come and set up the party, help serve food, sing along to the carols, draw the raffle and tidy up afterwards. I'm sure you will agree they did a stalwart job and were very useful to be able to jump in and help wherever was needed.

Singing was led by members from the Guys and Dolls singing group and all the favourites Christmas Carols were sung. After singing we drew our Christmas Raffle which made £2336. We are very pleased to have had some great top prizes donated this year such as a hotel stay with bed and breakfast at DeVere Cotswolds, Windsor Castle Family ticket and a tour of Highgrove with a champagne Afternoon tea. We thank those who donate prizes throughout the year and if you have unwanted gifts or contacts in companies that may be able to help with the top prizes please do get in touch.



CITIZENS ADVICE

Could you benefit from a grant?

Each week Caroline, a Welfare Benefits Caseworker from Citizens Advice Swindon, visits the Swindon MS & Neuro Therapy Centre to advise members about benefits issues. This can include queries about benefit entitlement as well as form-filling and help with challenging decisions.

In each newsletter we focus on a different benefit or some financial support that may be available – and in this edition we will be looking at grant funding.

What is a grant?

Grants are payments (often one-offs, but not always), that don't have to be repaid. They are available from a variety of sources including government, benevolent funds, charities and trusts. Each will have different criteria and amounts available, depending on what has been agreed by the grant provider.

Who can apply for a grant?

There are a wide variety of grants, and the criteria of the award-giver varies hugely. Some grants are aimed at those with disability or illness, while others are to assist people who have worked in certain occupations. There are government grants, for example to support people with adaptations or who are pregnant or recently had a baby – these grants usually require the applicant to be on a low-income.

Most grant applications will ask about income and savings, and for an explanation of why the grant is needed. Some will ask for a letter of support, for example from a medical professional or referrer such as Citizens Advice – this very much depends on the funder and the type of grant applied for.

What are grants paid for?

Some grants are available for specific expenditure (such as on equipment, adaptations or appliances) while other sources of funding are for less specific day-to-day expenses.

Where can I apply to for a grant?

There are several 'categories' of grant, and they all have their own application process:

- Government grants – such as those for disability adaptations, cold weather payments and maternity grants.
- General charities – with wide objectives such as helping 'people in need' rather than a particular group based on age or occupation.



- Grants for illness and disability – as well as funds covering general disability, there are grants for illness – including those for neurological conditions. These include the Multiple Sclerosis Society, Parkinson’s UK and the Motor Neurone Disease Association.
- Occupational charities – there are many benevolent funds established to support those who are working, or have worked, for particular industries or occupations. From acting and entertainment to building, engineering, food and drink provision, to retail and mail professions, it is worth looking to see if your occupation is covered by a benevolent fund.
- There are a number of grant charities for those who were in the Armed Forces – including the Royal British Legion and the Royal Airforce Benevolent Fund, but including lots of smaller funders too.
- Grants for particular groups of people – for example support for children, older people and carers. There are some regional funds too, which help people living in a particular area of the UK.
- Grants for people experiencing certain problems – for example many energy companies provide grants to help people with energy bills or other expenses.

How do I find out more?

The Guide to Grants for Individuals in Need is an annual publication – available in some libraries, this publication lists most of the available grants.

For government grants, the www.gov.uk lists available support

www.turn2us.org.uk is a charity that lists a range of grants with a search function to look for those that may apply.

Citizens Advice can help you to look for grants which match with your situation and may be able to support with application forms if needed.

For more information about grants, or benefits you may be entitled to, please contact the Swindon Therapy Centre to arrange an appointment with the Citizens Advice Welfare Benefits Caseworker.

OUR STARS

Janet's Puppy Skool

Our Fun Day and Dog Show in aid of **Swindon MS & Neuro Therapy Centre** was a great success and I need to say a big, big thank you to everyone who came and donated like mad, shopped at the stalls, raced around the agility and adventure courses, enjoyed coffee and amazing cakes, sponsored classes and joined in with all the fun! We had classes for every sort of dog including ones that showed how clever they are. We even had classes where they had to stay put in one spot for 30 seconds, then a minute and then two minutes and the finale was when our dogs had to sit when the music stopped and not get knocked out! My thanks are endless for everything everyone did to make sure we reached the essential £1000 we needed to secure Barclays help!! I am delighted to say that not only did we reach the magic £1000 but we more than doubled it so that with Barclays matching us, we have just presented **Swindon MS & Neuro Therapy Centre with £4140!**



Janet Garrett

Carpet Squares

Random sighting of people leaving the Centre with piles of carpet squares under their arms have been down to one of our supporters Clive who was clearing the Greenbridge Carpetright before its closure and asked if we could sell any carpet samples. So far we have made £126.45 from their sales. Thanks Clive!



SHOPPING

Amazon Smile



If you are an AmazonSmile customer, you can now support Swindon Therapy Centre For Multiple Sclerosis in the Amazon shopping app on your Android device! Simply follow these instructions to turn on AmazonSmile and start generating donations.

1. If you have the latest version of the Amazon Shopping App, open the App on your Android device.
 2. View Settings and select AmazonSmile.
 3. Follow the in App instructions to complete the process.
- AmazonSmile is not currently available for iOS users.

ONLINE SHOPPING



Thank you to our amazing supporters shopping online with easyfundraising. £13.93 was raised in September for the Centre by people just clicking through the easy fundraising site before they do their online shopping. Your support really does make a difference, so don't forget there's 3,300 shops and sites you can raise free donations with.

Please make sure you shop the easyfundraising way every time you buy something online:

<https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/msswindon>

JOIN US FOR THE MONTHLY DRAW

1st Prize £150

2nd Prize £45

3rd Prize £20

Prizes are drawn on the 7th of each month (or nearest working day) with entry for only £1 per week paid in 4 instalments of £13 payable on 5th September, 5th December, 5th March and 5th June. Next draw entry point is for the December Draw so your application form and payment (by standing order or cheque) needs to be at the centre by 5th Nov.

Please contact the Centre for an application form or further information.

FUNDRAISING

Swindon Community Lottery

Swindon Community Lottery has just launched weekly from December and we are one of the good causes listed to benefit from this. The tickets, costing £1 each, will be available online at swindonlottery.co.uk or by phone at 01793 969123. When you buy your ticket you can select the good cause that will receive 50% of the ticket money.

Players will pick six digits between 0 and 9 in any combination. Matching all six in the right order will win a jackpot of £25,000. Matching five digits in order will win £2,000, matching four will win £250 and matching three will win £25. Prizes will not be split, so matches are guaranteed the full amount of the prize.

The more tickets that we can encourage our supporters to buy, the more money we will receive from this lottery each year.

<https://www.swindonlottery.co.uk/support/swindon-ms-and-neuro-therapy-centre>

Amazon wishlist

We have created an amazon wishlist of items that we regularly buy at the centre and items that we would like to replace. If you would like to help us by buying something from this list please go to

https://www.amazon.co.uk/hz/wishlist/ls/3RY2FJXRQ6EQU?ref=wl_share

Store and Street Collections

Thank you to all our volunteers for this year who gave up time to help with Store and Street collections. In 2019 we had 14 of you help with our 12 store collections over the year which raised £1915.83. Thank you to those volunteers, some of who cover most of the collections that we hold. But we still have to sometimes cancel store collections due to lack of volunteers so if you can help throughout the year or just certain stores please look out for our monthly diary date emails and the sign-up sheets at the Centre.

Can your company support us?

There are many ways your company can help us fundraise through sponsorship of events or fundraising on our behalf.

Could you organise a team event to support the Swindon Therapy Centre such as:

Tough Mudder

Ride London (We have charity spaces available)

your own team event

Please speak to Sarah if you think your company or you could help the centre.

Raffle Donations

Have you any unwanted gifts?

Why not donate them to us? We are always in need of new raffle prizes and tombola prizes for fundraising activities and they are always gratefully received.

If you have any items you would like to donate please give them to Sarah.

MS NURSE VISITS

We have been fortunate to have the MS Nurses, Verity and Kate, running clinics at Swindon Therapy Centre for many years. Due to a shortage in NHS funding, they are no longer able to attend the centre to offer this service. Kate is hopeful that new funding might become available during the next financial year and they will be able to begin offering clinics here again. We will keep you updated when we hear from them later in the year. In the meantime, anyone wishing to see an MS Nurse, will need to contact them directly.

GRANTS UPDATE

A NEW ROOF OVER OUR HEADS

We were delighted to receive a pledge from Bernard Sunley Charitable Foundation towards the new roof, which has broken the half way mark in our fundraising. We now have only £18,912 left to raise! Built in the late 1980s, our felt roof is now disintegrating and leaks badly in heavy downpours, threatening the integrity of the building and causing us to close the gym during heavy rains. We propose to fit a single ply system made of EDPM rubber which is guaranteed by the manufacturers for 20 years. It is an economical, highly durable waterproofing solution for flat roofs, making our building fit for purpose for another 35 years.

Fitting a new roof provides the perfect opportunity to fix solar panels to it too! Allowing us to utilise the roofers' scaffolding and keep costs to a minimum. Solar panels would not only lower our carbon footprint but also lower our electricity bill. Combined with other energy saving measures, we could reduce both our carbon footprint and electricity bill by half. So it's an all-round winner. We have submitted a funding application for 40 panels, and now await their decision. Finger's crossed.

For further information, please contact **Kathryn**, email: grants@msswindon.org.uk



THANK YOU

The centre cannot survive without **your** support.

Over half of our income comes from donations from generous individuals and amazing fundraising efforts. Thank you so much to all those who have organised or hosted collections and run fundraising events. Thank you too to those who chose us as their charity partner this year, including....

TR Register, Kennet Valley Group

Blunsdon WI

Chippenham WI

Thamesdown Rotary

Thank you to the following stores for allocating us a collection

Morrisons, Eldene

Sainsbury's, Royal Wootton Bassett

Waitrose, Witchelstowe

Thank you to the following who have made Donations

ASDA West Swindon for the Green token Scheme

ASDA Haydon End for the Green token Scheme

TK Maxx

WHSmith

THANKS TO

With special thanks to the following Trusts, Foundations and companies. Without your support we simply would not be able to offer the range and scope of services that we do for people with MS and life limiting neurological conditions.



Douglas Arter Foundation

DNO Consulting

The Jack Lane Charitable Trust

Dr T C Wilson Charitable Trust

And finally, thanks to the following Trusts who have awarded grants to Swindon Therapy Centre's new roof and car park



The John Rayner Charitable Trust



Swindon
Community
Lottery

supporting

SWINDON
MS & NEURO
THERAPY CENTRE

WE'VE LAUNCHED OUR LOTTERY PAGE

Buy Your Tickets From Our Page - We Get 50%

- We now have a Swindon Community Lottery page!
- Support local causes and win prizes of up to £25,000!
- 50% of all tickets sold from our page go to us!
- PLUS 10% goes to other local good causes!
- Tickets only cost £1 per week!

To Start Supporting, Visit:

www.SwindonLottery.co.uk

And Search For:

MS and Neuro Therapy

Get in touch with the centre, We're here to help

Please get in touch and tell us your ideas and feedback. We would love to hear from you.



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