

**CHELTENHAM BRANCH NEWSLETTER**

**SEPTEMBER 2020**

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**THOUGHTS FROM THE CHAIR**

A family member asked me at the beginning of the month "How do you feel about eating out?" I expect you have had the same question put to you, especially during the "Eat out to Help Out" weeks of late summer.

It is one thing having the conditions of the lockdown loosened, and even a reduced bill for your meal to tempt you out. It is quite another to feel totally confident and safe about mixing with other people again particularly if like me you are 70+ and have an underlying condition called Parkinson's!

The situation is not helped by the gradual news during September that the virus case numbers are creeping back up with the attendant dangers for the aged and vulnerable. Group size indoors or out of doors now must not be more than six. Then there came the reduced evening hours in pubs and restaurants, more mask wearing laws and the rare event in peacetime of the PM addressing the nation. Everyone now concludes that a typical family Christmas dinner with both sets of grandparents is unlikely to be legal!

So it is likely to be the case if inter house visits are reduced, we will continue to miss many of the things that make life worthwhile: maintaining family links and friendships. The limits on group numbers and the quite onerous requirements for Covid-secure venues mean group activities, that we may find so enjoyable or beneficial, are more formal and restricted than pre-Covid or not yet available – such as singing in choirs, dancing, attending live exercise classes, going to church, attending branch meetings and coffee mornings to name but a few.

Given this social cost, I suspect at present, it boils down to whether or not we are prepared to accept that the risk of infection for us is reduced enough by embracing the new world of sprays, gels, handwashing, masks and social distancing.

The truth is that we are not going to feel really safe until a vaccine arrives and even then there will be some resistant to the offer of vaccination.

Parkinson's UK has been taking soundings about what members think about restoring face to face activities. We have had discussions on this topic at our Zoom "Coffee Mornings" and we were delighted to welcome Steve Ford, **Chief Executive of Parkinson's UK**, to our **last Parkinson's Café on 17th September. Steve was interested to** hear how we had been getting on in lockdown and since.

I think it fair to say that the overall mood of our members is that of caution when it comes to face to face activities but your Branch Committee would really like to hear your views and therefore attach a questionnaire to this newsletter with details of how you can reply.

At the time of writing this we are exploring what conditions would have to meet to start up our Table Tennis Group again, not least because it is hugely important for us to maintain some sort of exercise regime even if it is only a short walk each day.

It is so well documented that for those of us with Parkinson's regular exercise is also as important as medication and I am glad that there are some local on line exercise activities for us to consider:

## UPDATE ON SOME LOCAL EXERCISE CLASSES

1. Sarah Hartley sent us the following information: Be Social Winchcombe is now offering an online version of its successful Dance with Parkinson's class.

The online class is held on a Tuesday from 2pm – 2.40pm through the Zoom platform.

Participants log in and join a group session where Sarah uses a number of the styles and techniques that she has been using in her Winchcombe class for over two years. These can often help alleviate symptoms as well as help improve general well-being.

The cost is £3.50 per session with a suggested donation of a further £1 if a friend / carer is joining in too.

Anyone interested in joining the class should phone 01242 603207 or email [dance@besocialwinchcombe.com](mailto:dance@besocialwinchcombe.com).

Sarah will go through all the information needed and send log in details plus a guide to safe practice while taking part in Zoom sessions at home.

The good news is that her Winchcombe class has now restarted in its physical location and she is looking at further venues to restart classes in a socially distanced and safe manner.

2. Angela Turner, a branch member who used to run a popular Move it or Lose it class locally until earlier this year, has updated us on what some other exercise providers are now doing:

"My Move it or Lose it friend, Kathy, has decided to give up and so won't be starting up her classes. Others (Active Balance: Jo-Anne, Trish and Toni) I believe are sticking with Zoom. The constraints on numbers of participants now allowed is prohibitive to an instructor covering their costs."

3. Our Physio-led exercise class (run jointly with the MS Society) has restarted on Zoom but at present only for previous attendees whose mobility the class leader, Debbie, has previously assessed.

## RESEARCH UPDATE:

### A Good Night's Sleep: Parkinson's and Your Pillow

The East of England area recently had a Zoom session for talks from two sleep specialists. The video of the presentations can be found on You Tube. Just type in the search line:

#### **A Good Night's Sleep: Parkinson's and Your Pillow.**

When I watched it I was immediately reassured to discover I am not alone in having sleep problems. Around 60% of those with Parkinson's do as opposed to 15% of those without.

I have no trouble getting off to sleep but more often than not I wake again at around 2.30 and then drift in and out of mostly unsatisfying dozing! This pattern is typical.

It is fascinating to see the many different kinds of sleep disorder. The most dramatic part showed patients who were asleep acting out their dreams with arm and leg movements which clearly might cause injury to patient or partner.

The following tips were given:

- *Regular bed times*
- *Room dark and at a comfortable temperature*
- *Suitable mattress and pillow (especially if difficulty turning)*
- *Avoid TV and i-pad before bed*
- *Relaxation techniques*
- *Avoid prolonged time in bed when awake*
- *Exercise during the day (but avoid intense exercise just before bed)*

## **PARKINSON'S AND CORONAVIRUS - OBTAINING HELP OR ADVICE:**

There is support on offer for anyone affected by Parkinson's from the **Parkinson's UK helpline, Website and Parkinson's Local Advisors** (See **Useful Contacts** below).

The Parkinson's UK website advice on **Coronavirus and Parkinson's** is regularly updated as Government and NHS policies and advice change.

**<https://www.parkinsons.org.uk/news/understanding-coronavirus-and-parkinsons>**

The following guidance from the Parkinson's UK Website was **up-to-date on 25<sup>th</sup> September**. The main changes include:

- **Rule of Six (Up to 6 people from different households both indoors and outdoors) introduced in England**
- **Wearing of Face Coverings extended to more venues**
- **Mobile Tracing App made available for downloading**

## **What should I do?**

### **Limit your social contacts**

Following recent briefings from governments in devolved countries, and from the UK government, guidance for people in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland is to limit social contacts as much as possible. This includes working from home if you can and not mixing with others unless it is essential to do so. Meeting friends and family, where it is possible, is still safest in an outdoor environment.

These changes are a response to the increasing spread of the virus and the approaching colder months. Everyone must take action now to slow the spread, or tougher restrictions will need to be brought in.

Local lockdowns with stricter measures continue to take place. If you live or work in one of the areas affected, you must follow these guidelines. You can see which areas are in a local lockdown on the relevant government website:

- [England](#)
- [Wales](#)

There are no local lockdowns in Northern Ireland or Scotland as they have country-wide guidance.

Guidance for people who are clinically vulnerable, including people with Parkinson's, says that it's important to limit social contacts as much as possible. Follow distancing and hygiene guidelines if you do go out.

The UK government advises people to think 'Hands. Face. Space':

- You should wash your **hands** regularly, for at least 20 seconds.
- You should wear a **face** covering in enclosed spaces.

Parkinson's UK is the operating name of the Parkinson's Disease Society of the United Kingdom.  
A charity registered in England and Wales (258197) and in Scotland (SC037554)

- You should give people outside of your household **space** of at least 2 metres, or 1 metre where other measures are in place.

During this pandemic, it's especially important to take extra care of your wellbeing and mental health. We've published an [article on how to cope if you're feeling isolated](#). And the charity, Mind, have put together some [helpful guidance on wellbeing and coronavirus](#).

## Reasons to leave home, and distancing

If you leave the house you should try to avoid busy times and spaces. Keep a distance of 2 metres (6 feet) from people you do not live with.

Where it's not possible to maintain a 2m distance, 1m is allowed. This is only where extra precautions are in place and may apply to places like offices, supermarkets, cafes. We recommend that you check what extra precautions are in place before you decide if this is safe for you. Extra precautions include proper ventilation, no face to face contact, face coverings, and plastic screens.

Continue to follow good hygiene practices, including regular hand-washing, not sharing crockery and cutlery, and wiping down surfaces.

## Reasons you may leave your home include:

- For work, where you cannot work from home.
- Going to shops and other places that are permitted to be open, staying 2m apart.
- To exercise or spend time outdoors, staying 2m apart.
- To socialise outdoors, staying 2m apart (in groups of no more than 6 people in England, 30 people in Wales, and 6 people in Scotland – from no more than 2 households. In Northern Ireland, no more than 6 people from 2 households can meet in a private garden, while groups of up to 15 can meet in public spaces). See full guidance for how many people you can socialise with below.
- To attend church services or places of worship.
- Any medical need, including to donate blood, avoid injury or illness, escape risk of harm, or provide care or help to a vulnerable person.

## How many people can meet at once?

It's best to avoid as much unnecessary social contact as you can. If you leave your house you should try to avoid busy times and spaces, and keep a distance of 2 metres from people you do not live with.

Your personal situation and circumstances may lead to exceptions, or extra precautions.

As a guide, at the time of writing the social gathering rules for the general population in England are as follows:

**Indoors (meeting friends and family, including overnight stays):** Up to 6 people from different households

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## Wear a Face Covering

If you have to be in an indoor space, it's best to wear a face covering. Face coverings on public transport, shops and other indoor places are compulsory throughout the UK. You may also be asked to wear one in other situations, like hospitals or GP surgeries.

You can see [how to make and wear a face covering here](#). We also sell [face coverings and filters in our shop here](#).

You do not need to wear a face covering if you have a good reason not to. If you have a physical or mental illness, or a disability that means you cannot put on, wear or remove a face covering, you do not have to wear one. You do not have to provide medical evidence of your reason for not wearing a face covering.

For exemptions and guidance you can refer to the specific guidance for [England](#)

If you feel more comfortable, you can carry a face covering exempt card. [You can download and print one free of charge here](#). The second and third cards under the heading, 'Learning disability cards' are suitable for anyone with Parkinson's who cannot wear a face covering.

## Staying up to date on coronavirus around the UK

### Coronavirus testing and contact tracing - what do I do?

If you, or anyone in your household, has symptoms, you should isolate for at least 10 days.

Each country in the UK has announced systems for coronavirus testing and contact tracing to control the spread of the virus.

Testing and tracing means that, if you have symptoms, you can arrange a test. If your test comes back positive, you will be asked about who you've been in close contact with in the 2 days before, and 10 days after, developing symptoms. Close contact means:

- people you've spent 15 minutes or more with at a distance of less than 2 metres
- people you've had direct contact with - such as sexual partners, household members or people with whom you've had face-to-face conversations at a distance of less than 1 metre.

Those people will be notified by phone, email, or text that they should isolate for 14 days. They won't be told who they were in contact with who had the virus.

If you are notified that you may have been in contact with the virus, you must self-isolate for 14 days even if you do not have symptoms.

### How will I know if a notification is genuine?

If you've been advised by one of the country testing and tracing services to isolate, please do so. Trace callers will never ask you for details that could put your privacy or finances at risk.

The BBC has shared [advice on how to avoid scams](#).

### Mobile phone tracing apps

You can now download a free mobile phone app that will tell you if you have been in contact with someone who has coronavirus.

### Download the app for England and Wales

### Where can I find up to date information and guidance?

- **England** - follow advice from the [NHS](#) and [Government](#).

These sources reflect the most up-to-date information and will be updated as the situation progresses.

### STOP PRESS:

**Special Branch Meeting on Zoom with our Branch President , Dr. Peter Fletcher, with his always interesting and informative **Annual Parkinson's Update**.**

Even if you don't usually join us for our regular Zoom socials please join us on **Tuesday October 29<sup>th</sup> at 3pm**. An invite and meeting link details will be emailed to the branch mailing list before this meeting.

# USEFUL INFORMATION

## BRANCH ON-LINE EVENTS (on Zoom)

**Parkinson's Cafe on Zoom** 11.00am Thursdays October 1<sup>st</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup> & 29<sup>th</sup>, November 12<sup>th</sup> & 26<sup>th</sup>, December 10<sup>th</sup> (but please note NOT on December 24<sup>th</sup>)

An invite and meeting link details will we be emailed to the branch mailing list before each Parkinson's Café.

**Table Tennis Zoom Meeting** 2.00pm Fridays October 9<sup>th</sup> & 23<sup>rd</sup>

An invite and meeting link details will we be emailed to the group members before each meeting.

**NB:** if live Table Tennis sessions are able to safely resume these zoom sessions will not take place.

**STOP PRESS: Special Branch Meeting on Zoom with our Branch President, Dr. Peter Fletcher, with his Annual Parkinson's Update - Tuesday October 29<sup>th</sup> at 3pm**

An invite and meeting link details will we be emailed to the branch mailing list before this meeting

## BRANCH MEETINGS & REGULAR EVENTS

**NB:** All face to face meetings/events are cancelled until further notice.

The Branch Committee are currently looking at detailed guidance, issued by Parkinson's UK, about how, and when, we can restart face to face meetings/events in a Covid secure manner.

## BRANCH CONTACTS

**Branch Chair:** Harry Matthews 07515 857110 or parkinsonshjm@gmail.com

**Branch and Membership Secretary:** Ian Jones 07903 850597 or ianjones.parkinsons@gmail.com

**Branch Treasurer:** Dot Simpson 01242 583894 or dsimpson.parkinsons@googlemail.com

**Committee Members:** Val & Clive Corke, James Howell, Joy & James Ingram,  
Didi Jepson, Hilary Moody

**Branch Website:** <http://www.cheltenhamparkinsons.org.uk/>

## USEFUL CONTACTS

**Parkinson's UK Website:** <http://www.parkinsons.org.uk>

**Parkinson's UK Helpline:** (phone free) 0808 800 0303 or email [hello@parkinsons.org.uk](mailto:hello@parkinsons.org.uk)

**Parkinson's Local Advisor Service:** contact our helpline on 0808 800 0303 or email [hello@parkinsons.org.uk](mailto:hello@parkinsons.org.uk) to be put in touch with a local adviser.

**Parkinson's Nurse Specialist Service:** 0300 421 8109 or [parkinsons.team@ghc.nhs.uk](mailto:parkinsons.team@ghc.nhs.uk)

**Age UK Help Team:** Monday – Friday 9am – 4pm 01452 422660

**Mind:** Infoline: 0300 123 3393 or [www.mind.org.uk/information-support](http://www.mind.org.uk/information-support)

**Samaritans:** call free any time, from any phone, on 116 123.