

Moving Forward & Living Well.

Autumn 2014

Issue 4

This is our fourth newsletter ... and we missed the self imposed deadline. September usually means the start of autumn...but hopefully not the complete end of summer ... no excuses but it's been a busy few months....

The Hunts Community Cancer Network our charity

is well and truly underway. Fund raising to support its work is already delivering results. Patients as ever have been the greatest support. John sold his bicycle and donated £100 and some of his friends raised over £300 more. A neighbour of Jill's and his colleagues have pledged £500. Vivienne has put her jam making skills towards the cause and we must mention Baz whose own Prostate charity continues to support us with donations.

Last Friday evening could be known as our official launch. We want to say a massive thank you to Susan & Graham Moore who sponsored the Jazz band and to The Old Bridge Hotel who hosted our event. This was not just any jazz band but, for any aficionados out there, It was the *legendary* David Newton Trio. The evening raised just over £1000.

So what do we do with the funds we are raising? Well so far we have bought meditation mats & cushions. The meditation has been a huge help to our first cohort of ladies that have now progressed to the advanced class. They truly feel their minds are clearer and they can manage difficult thoughts and be more positive. We have funded Pilates mats. We want to offer travelling expenses to the very generous people like Sara who has offered her time free of charge to help patients see the benefits of Pilates. Sara will be offering a 6 week course, on a

Every Friday
Holiday Inn, Brampton
Race Course.

In the Coffee Lounge

10am-12md

Come along & meet us.
Relaxing atmosphere, free
yoga session,
Confidential &
professional advice.



Patient Conference

Living with Cancer

November 6th 2014

Free to patients & carers

Lunch & refreshments
included.

More information
coming soon!

rolling programme. Yet another patient is giving us her artistic talents and the charity is funding a good range of artistic materials to be used there. Rita holds a 2 hour drop in session every Monday afternoon- This class is for anyone to come and have a go. Patients report it very relaxing and enjoy a coffee and chance to chat amongst themselves.

We also use the funds to support our patient education series by allowing us to employ expert contributors. This brings us on to telling you about our next Patient Conference.

November 6th is the date for our 3rd Conference. We have had over 70 attendees at our past events and would hope to meet that target again. It will follow a similar theme but, as ever for those that feel they would like to attend again, we try to offer something a little different. Posters and programmes will be out by the end of the month. These days are hugely informative and it's also a great place to find a little support during an unsettling time.

The design for our Network patient website will hopefully be finished at the end of the month. It had to go on hold over the summer months as the students were off school but in the next week or two we aim to have this completed.

The Drop in and yoga session continue on Fridays .These are aimed at those people who are newly diagnosed and starting out on their treatment. We also

encourage those that are younger and living with cancer and aiming to continue with a full and active life.

The self-managed after care programme (SMAC) has begun. This is for ladies with Breast cancer who are within our pilot catchment area and have a low risk of recurrence.

At present after treatment, patients are expected to come back to the hospital for regular follow ups. This is a very out dated process.

In spite of these follow-ups, many patients say they feel abandoned after the end of their course of active treatment and that they have little support in trying to rebuild their lives, work, education, self-employment, relationships, fitness and priorities.

It is now known that follow up can be better managed with a process known as Self -managed aftercare.

This system gives patients better psychological

support, enabling them to come to terms with the diagnosis and treatment and resume as normal a life as possible as quickly as possible. It provides more opportunities to give advice on nutrition, exercise and healthy lifestyle, improving the reducing the risk of recurrence. Recurrences are diagnosed earlier with this improved rapid and timely access for patients with suspicious symptoms. We hope that once we have this system up and running for breast cancer we will roll out the same benefits for colorectal and prostate cancer patients with a good prognosis.

Red Flag Symptoms. We will continue to raise awareness about Spinal Cord Compression. This is often diagnosed late and patients fail to report symptoms. Most common with Breast, Prostate and Lung cancers and also Multiple Myeloma.

So we make no apologies for repeating ourselves in this issue

If you experience any of the following please talk to your health professional

Pain or tenderness in the middle or top of your back or neck

Severe pain in your lower back that gets worse or doesn't go away

Pain in your back that is worse when you cough, sneeze or go to the toilet

Back pain that stops you from sleeping

Numbness, weakness or difficulty using your arms or legs

A band of pain down your arm or leg or around your body

Changes in sensation in a part of your body, for example pins and needles or electric shock sensations

Not being able to empty your bowel or bladder

Problems controlling your bowel or bladder.

Managing Your Cancer responsibly. Whilst many patients are turning up to these sessions, there are some that are not!

We cannot of course insist you come BUT, our experience tells us that these workshops are invaluable. Patients are

'happy' to come along to a pre chemotherapy chat- so why not a post treatment one? There is a great deal of information that patients need to know. Information that you most likely don't even know that you need to know! Such as;

Are there any late effects of cancer treatment that I should be prepared for?

How might I know if my cancer returns? What can I do to spot it early?

Is there any research to say that I can help my cancer stay in remission? Can good nutrition & exercise help?

Who should I call if I need advice?

How soon will I be able to go back to work?

Everyone should have an invite to one of these 2 hour Sessions. Invites are given out at your pre - chemotherapy clinic with a date that falls during the first few months of your treatment. We hold them at this time because the healthy lifestyle advice is important early on in your treatment and preparing yourself for when your treatment finishes is also very important.

If you have not attended a workshop and would like to its not too late, just let us know.

So, contact details are on this page for everything that we have talked about.

The easiest way is to email virginiameleesi@nhs.net .but please feel free to call any of the telephone numbers.

If you would like to offer your talents or fundraise for us this would also be welcomed.

If you wish to be notified of future events such as the patient conference then let us know now and we will be sure to contact you nearer the time.

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