

# Moving Forward & Living Well.

Winter 2015

Issue 9

## Here we go again! That's what I'm thinking right now. How fast does 4 months pass?

Whilst I want to inform readers of important issues and update you on our latest ventures, the main intention of this newsletter from inception has been just to remind you that we're here for you. If there are things that you're unsure of or you just have that 'niggle' of a worry, then this newsletter comes along to remind you to contact us. You can phone us, email or text, whatever you find easiest.

That said, there is much to update you on. In our last letter I hinted towards a web based personal medical record that would include your entire cancer history and treatment plan including clinical results such as blood tests, radiology results and consultation letters. It would enable telemedicine and could be viewed and added to by GPs, Consultants and nurses - even carers if appropriate. This would be your personal cancer record that could be shared when appropriate and avoid all those appointments where lack of communication causes immense frustration - because you would be in control! This is still one of our main projects and is moving forward but it is a massive project - one of a kind and will take a little more time to bring to fruition. Once we are further forward I will be looking for your support to ensure that the user interface is just right for you.

HCCN strive to bring quality, enhanced care and innovation to the people it cares for. As ever, with the backing of our charity, we will be the first cancer team in the country, I believe, to bring point of care blood testing to your home! The nursing service strives to keep people out of hospital. Often when we go out to review poorly patients at home we have to use experience and judgement to decide if someone should come in to hospital, if there is doubt we admit them. This new technology will allow us to check for dehydration, renal failure, high calcium (often causes reversible debilitating effects) infection and sepsis and whether a patient requires a blood transfusion at home - within 4 minutes! That will enable us to better direct our care. Better still, it doesn't mean that we will admit that person as we are able to treat many of these things at home with our enhanced service.

Next on the hit list is to offer Ascitic drainage at home. What's this? In some patients, excess fluid can accumulate in their tummy. This causes not only massive discomfort but shortness of breath and decreased dietary intake. Presently, those patients need to have a very uncomfortable journey into hospital and spend a very long day having the fluid drained off. This also frequently involves a further prior visit to have an ultrasound to correctly locate the amount of fluid and safest position to insert the drain.

## Every Friday

Holiday Inn, Brampton  
Race Course.

## In the Coffee Lounge

10 am - 12 noon

New Diagnosis? Having  
treatment? Come along &  
meet us

Relaxing atmosphere, free  
yoga session, confidential  
& professional advice.

## Our next Patient Conference

## Living with Cancer

20th April 2016

Free to patients & carers

Lunch & refreshments  
included

Partly the reason for such a long day is driven by the whole process of coming into hospital and waiting for a doctor to be able to perform the procedure. So, I am training to do this procedure safely at home. Once again, the charity is funding the purchase of a portable Ultrasound machine to enable the procedure to happen safely.

Lastly, is our recent purchase of an Electro acupuncture machine!! Increasingly studies are showing this to outperform traditional medications in the control of hot flushes. Hot flushes are common in chemo-induced menopause, prostate men receiving hormone treatments and ladies on hormone treatments for breast and ovarian cancers. So, now I trade in my traditional techniques for an additional buzz! We also offer acupuncture for chemo related nausea, anxiety, breathlessness and pain.

Writing this really illustrates how the money donated locally stays local and hugely impacts not only on the quality of life for patients with cancer locally but puts us in the forefront of innovation in cancer care.

Back to my old favorite topics! One of the first pieces of machinery donated to us was the hydrogen/methane breath test machine. This was a very expensive piece of kit donated by a very special local businessman – Philip Friend. Philip was very committed to not only supporting the continuation of our service but also, he just loved technology!

So, we are reminding all those readers who might have had upper gastro intestinal surgery, colorectal surgery, pelvic radiation treatment (ovarian, prostate, colorectal) and/or chemotherapy to come forward if they are experiencing on-going and often life altering issues with their gastro intestinal tract. This might be bloating, excessive flatulence, belching or wind, nausea, pain and often, most distressingly, the need to defecate several times a day, even during the night. These symptoms are not exhaustive and come in any combination. Please contact us to chat through if any of the above sound familiar.

I would also urge you all to re-visit our website, formerly known as [www.huntscommunitycancernetwork.org](http://www.huntscommunitycancernetwork.org) and now renamed [www.hccn.org.uk](http://www.hccn.org.uk) Andy and Susan have worked hard on re-vamping and re-organising the site – thank you both. There are also new links on the website to check out, one being some novel appliances to better enable intimacy after cancer treatments that cause issues in this area of life.

The biggest change of all though is that the website can come to you if you subscribe. Just visit the home page and enter your name and email address in the subscribe box and all our updates, including those from the charity will be sent direct to your inbox.

**The drop-in and yoga sessions continue on Friday mornings** and we have our regular meditation class on a Thursday morning. These are all aimed at those people who are newly diagnosed and starting out on their treatment, but we are also happy to see those living with cancer and aiming to continue with a full and active life joining us as well.

**Our very popular circuit class.** This class is really delivering. Aimed at those of you who are going through or finished treatment. It looks not only to build up your fitness level in a safe and friendly environment but ticks all the boxes as the emerging evidence gathers pace on how exercise can significantly reduce the statistics of cancer recurrence. All exercises are individually tailored to your personal requirements and takes place in a friendly group with like-minded support. Because of its success we now run 2 classes a week - **just call us and we will give you the details.**

**Remember, if you have been recently diagnosed with cancer you will be asked to attend our clinic. This clinic will not only update you on the latest evidence behind exercise and nutrition but support you to remain informed and in control throughout your cancer diagnosis and treatment – keeping you in the control seat.**

**Please contact us for further information.**

*For new readers with a diagnosis of breast, prostate or lung cancer you may not be aware of our on-going campaign. Please ask your nurse or doctor about the signs of spinal cord compression. This often presents itself as new or worsening back pain, tingling, numbness/loss of sensation in legs or arms. Change in bladder or bowel sensation.* We will continue to raise awareness about Spinal Cord Compression. This can often be diagnosed later than it could be because patients fail to recognise the symptoms and seek medical advice. **Please visit our website to learn more about the warning signs.**

A continued appeal for help in the Fen area. As you may know our non-clinical work, like our conferences are funded by our charity. I am pleased to say that the funding we have received will now allow us to replicate the current services we offer, most of which are currently Huntingdon based, to other "Centres" such as March.

We intend to start by establishing new Drop-In centres with chair based yoga. The team who undertake this work for us are all volunteers. We would be delighted if anyone out there can recommend a suitable hotel we could approach as a venue in the March area. If you have a suggestion just contact Susan on [moore.susan@btinternet.com](mailto:moore.susan@btinternet.com) or call 07738 208831 and she will follow it up.



## Charity News

Thank you to those people who were able to accept our invitation and joined us on 3<sup>rd</sup> December for our joint "At Home" where we shared not only what we have been doing to raise funds but showed how those funds have been used. We will definitely do it again next year.

We share Gini's excitement at being able to equip the team with the point of care blood testing machines. We know they will make a big difference. Earlier understanding of a problem can mean earlier resolution and the earlier easing of pain and discomfort and we know how important that is. We are looking forward to them arriving.

## Future Fundraising plans

Mandy and her team are working on next year's fundraising plans which we will be unveiling soon but there is one activity that we are all really excited about that you need to know about now. Thanks to the determined work of Bex and her team we will be encouraging people to gain sponsorship and compete in the **Peterborough Insane Terrain event on 10<sup>th</sup> April 2016.**

If you want to have a look at their website you can find out all about it at [www.insaneterrainrunning.com](http://www.insaneterrainrunning.com). Gini has already signed up even though she knows she may start the event with make-up but will undoubtedly finish it covered in mud! I shall be putting my children under pressure to join in.

Don't worry if, like me your running and fighting through mud days are behind you, you can still come and enjoy the event with us and bring your friends along. We are planning on having a mystery sports person attend and doing all manner of fun things. So put the date in your diary and start telling your friends how easy it is to join in.



**Viv's 100 Club.** Reliable income is an important way to help the charity to plan its spending and this Club not only provides us with that regular income it pays out prizes as well. Please help us move from having 30+ members to a full house of 100. For a monthly subscription of just £4 you could be a lucky prize winner. 50% of the takings go back out in monthly prizes!

Remember to sign up to the website then we can keep you updated about the wonderful things people do to raise funds for us. [www.hccn.org.uk](http://www.hccn.org.uk). And if there is an article or story you'd like to share for the benefit of others please send them to me at [susan@hccnthecharity.org](mailto:susan@hccnthecharity.org)

**As ever** contact details are on this page for everything that we have talked about.

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. Though if you subscribe to our website that information will come to your inbox making your life easier.

*Gini and the team*

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**[www.hccn.org.uk](http://www.hccn.org.uk)**

**& facebook**

**[www.healthunlocked](http://www.healthunlocked) (HCCN)**

**HCCN**  
Hunts Community Cancer Network

*There for you,  
powered by you!*