

Swindon & District Branch

The Swindon & District Branch of Parkinson's UK would like to express our grateful thanks to the Stratton St Margaret Parish Council for their grant of £1,300. This grant will go towards the running costs of our Special Seated Class for people with Parkinson's who now have difficulty standing due to the progressive nature of the disease. This will include room hire, instructor fees and transport costs for those who have no other means of participating in the class

Our aim is to provide support for everyone affected by Parkinson's in the Swindon area by providing activities and an environment accessible to all, including family members and carers. To achieve our aim the Branch must raise all money required itself.

Parkinson's is a degenerative neurological condition that affects 1:500 people in the UK. There is no cure and current medication only masks the symptoms and can cause nasty side effects. It does not stop, delay or cure the disease. Currently the only thing proven to delay this progression is exercise in that it gives some protection to the dopamine producing brain cells that are dying in Parkinson's. Dopamine makes the part of the brain that controls movement, multi-tasking and implicit learning work. Normally by the time of diagnosis 50% of these brain cells have been affected and up to 80% of dopamine production lost.

We currently provide a free 5 days Exercise Programme to help people stay active for longer. This included two Balance and Exercise Classes at Grange Leisure, 2 Tai Chi Classes, one of which is at Grange Leisure, that, a Special Seated Class for those with difficulty standing and Adapted Walking Football, both at Grange Leisure. Walking Football can help you with balance, movement and dexterity. Also newly introduced Dance with a teacher from Swindon Dance who is qualified in Dance for Parkinson's. The aims of the Dance Class are to address the issues often associated with Parkinson's such as posture, gait and balance whilst having fun!

Exercise is considered so important for people with Parkinson's that Swindon Parkinson's Services at GWH refer their patients to them. The Balance & Exercise and Seated Class were both developed by a Parkinson's physiotherapist at GWH and they regularly visit the classes to review them and make changes.

To support our Carers who meet on Wednesdays at Grange Leisure while the Balance and Exercise classes are taking place. We also provide a Respite service.

Getting out and being able to mix and talk with other people is also be very beneficial. To encourage people to socialise and share their problems and concerns with others, we organise outings and activities such as canal boat trips and visits to gardens, talks of interest, such as by Wiltshire Wild Life and the Swindon Historical Society, well fare talks, examples being by the Parkinson's Nurses and Care Agencies such as Swindon Carers, on subjects of interest such as Parkinson's Research and herbal medicines and evening events such as quizzes, skittles and pub games.

We have also produced a DVD "Newly Diagnosed with Parkinson's" advising them of what help and support there is in the Swindon area, this included filming the Parkinson's consultant, nurses, and other health professionals, which we provide free to GWH who issue it to all newly diagnosed patients. Filming has recently finished supported by Swindon View Point and Comic Relief to

update this DVD. The latest version, have now been delivered to our Parkinson's nurse at GWH. We enclose a copy of the DVD so you can hear what Dr. Graham Lennox, a Parkinson's Consultant says about the importance of exercise.

Once again, we thank you for you your generous Grant and can assure you it will be used to provide a vital service.

Dave Logan
Branch Chair