



# WRSO Newsletter

WOLVERHAMPTON RHEUMATOLOGY SUPPORT GROUP

Charity No 1041181

CARING IS SHARING

Issue Number 125

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## **Monday 7<sup>th</sup> December 2015**

### **Christmas Luncheon**

### **Plus entertainment with: The Ashmore Park Choir**

Linden House  
211 Tettenhall Road, Wolverhampton.  
WV6 0DD

**12 30pm for 1pm**

If you have any queries regarding the coffee mornings please ring Joyce Knibbs  
Mobile: 07539949723 (Monday –Friday)  
Or  
email: [jansimpson03@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:jansimpson03@yahoo.co.uk)

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- **Dates for your Diary**
- **AGM (full report)**

## **Dates for your Diary**

### **Coffee Morning**

#### **Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2015**

10 30am – 12 30pm  
(Doors open at 10 20am)

Linden House

211 Tettenhall Road, Wolverhampton.  
WV6 0DD

**Christmas Gifts Sales  
(Buy all your Xmas presents)**

#### **Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> November 2015**

**Alvaston Hall Cheshire  
(Christmas Luncheon Day Trip)**

#### **Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> January 2016**

**Birmingham Hippodrome  
(Aladdin Pantomime)**

Enquires to Mary Allen Please note  
telephone: 01902 685683

**Dates of 2016 Coffee Mornings appear at end of this Newsletter**

**MINUTES OF ANNUAL GENERAL  
MEETING WOLVERHAMPTON  
RHEUMATOLOGY SUPPORT GROUP  
HELD AT LINDEN HOUSE ON THE 21  
SEPTEMBER 2015 AT 13.00**

**PRESENT**

**GUEST SPEAKERS**

Dr P Newton (President)  
Consultant Rheumatologist  
Dr J Dixey (Vice President)  
Consultant Rheumatologist  
Liz Walker (in the Chair)  
Joyce Knibbs (Vice Chair)  
Kath Sankey (Treasurer)  
Jan Simpson  
Shiela Fardoe  
Pat Jones  
Mary Allen  
Bhagwant Sachdeva  
Plus 52 WRSG members

**1 APOLOGIES;** Balbir Rai, Peter Boneham, Betty Richards

**Liz Walker;** Chairperson, opened the meeting by welcoming members, and Guests speakers, thanking everyone for their continued support of the group.

**2. Minutes of AGM September 2013;**

Liz advised the minutes for the AGM September 2014 had been agreed as a true record, proposed by Joyce Knibbs and seconded by Pat Jones, 02 October 2014.

**3. Matters arising from the minutes;**

A copy of the AGM minutes were sent to every member in the October 14 News Letter. There was one matter arising from the AGM regarding the motion put forward by Rob Marris to raise members concerns surrounding New Cross Hospital and Cannock Hospital merger. Liz advised that

WRSG had written to Mr D Loughton, which resulted in a successful meeting. A copy of the original letter to Mr Loughton was printed in the November 14 Newsletter and the transcript of the meeting was published in the January 15 Newsletter. Since then we need to report that we have not yet received the £3000, for a Challenging Arthritis course because the course is no longer available for our group to purchase. Also, since the meeting considerable changes have been made to the bus service from Wolverhampton to Cannock Hospital, the most recent change to the X68 bus route has been to reduce the evening runs, the last bus now leaves Cannock hospital at 6.30 and has 3 new stops added to its journey.

*Rob Marris thanked the committee for following up his motion and congratulated on a job well done.*

Should anyone wishes to view the original letter and meeting transcript, they can be made available on request.

**4. Re Election of Committee 2015 – 2016**

Committee members have agreed to be re-elected for a further 12 months. However, Liz announced that Dr Newton had decided to stand down as President of the group. Fortunately for us, Dr Dixey agreed to step up to be WRSG President.

Liz remarked Dr Newton had been with WRSG right from the start and given so much to the group, we did not want to let him go so were thankful to be able to say he had accepted the position of Honorary Vice President.

Liz Walker  
Chairperson/Newsletter Editor  
Joyce Knibbs  
Vice -Chair/Information Sessions  
Kath Sankey  
Treasurer  
Sheila Fardoe  
Fund Raiser/Social Representative  
Pat Jones  
Equipment Officer/Patient  
Representative Bhagwant  
Sachdeva Recruitment  
Representative Balbir Rai  
Recruitment Representative / statistics  
Jan Simpson  
Secretary  
Mary Allen  
Outings for the Group

This was proposed by Viv Worrall and  
seconded by Reg Jones.

5.

**Full copy of Chair persons report;  
WOLVERHAMPTON  
RHEUMATOLOGY SUPPORT GROUP  
(WRSG)  
CHAIRPERSON REPORT 2015**

**Liz Walker (Chairperson)** The  
Wolverhampton Rheumatology  
Support Group (WRSG) is now twenty  
one years old and getting stronger and  
stronger as each year passes. May I  
thank everyone for supporting the  
WRSG over so many years, only a few  
of our members will remember the  
group starting in 1994 commissioned by  
Carol Boneham our first Chairperson  
and indeed our first President Doctor  
Paul Newton. As your 3<sup>rd</sup> and present  
Chairperson I have much pleasure in  
presenting the Annual report for 2015,  
twenty one years on and to confirm  
once again of our continuing success in  
achieving the original objective of the  
group which is to support members who  
live in Wolverhampton and surrounding  
areas all of whom have Arthritis. The  
WRSG's success with over 170

members is indeed due to our  
dedicated membership which underpins  
everything that the group tries to  
achieve.

Reflecting on the past twelve months it  
has been a very busy and very  
successful year, unfortunately we have  
once again encountered a significant  
amount of ill health issues amongst the  
committee but the support from my  
colleagues has been outstanding which  
has enabled the group to function  
normally without any disruption. Thank  
you to Jan Simpson our secretary for  
her individual support to me over the  
past year.

**Objective: To support our members.**

Our membership numbers this past  
year have reached 172. We continue to  
support our members with various  
forms of engagement. Our coffee  
mornings held on the first Monday of  
every month are very successful with  
over a third of our membership  
(averaging at 47) attending here at  
Linden House.

**Coffee Mornings/Information  
Sessions**

Throughout the past twelve months we  
have enjoyed a variety of  
coffee/information mornings. Joyce  
Knibbs works very hard with organising  
speakers and to vary the need for  
lectures from professional speakers  
with the emphasis on Arthritis to inform  
our members and the need for a lighter  
social emphasis. Thank you Joyce for  
your hard work.

**September 2014** - Social morning

**October 2014** - Fire Safety in the Home  
(Brian Pearce Wolverhampton Fire  
Service)

**November 2014** - Christmas Gifts  
Ideas

**December 2014** - Christmas meal for  
our members at Linden House

**January 2015** - Bring and Buy Sale

**February 2015** -Dementia Awareness  
(Jane James Information Worker  
Alzheimer's Asc)

**March 2015** - Bake a Cake

Competition;

*1<sup>st</sup> Sheila Short, 2<sup>nd</sup> Kath Sankey,  
3<sup>rd</sup> Christine Srodzinsky*

**April 2015** - National Rheumatoid Arthritis (Gill Weedon)

**May 2015** - Musculoskeletal

Consultation (Sharon Sidhu

Wolverhampton Clinical Commissioning Group)

**June 2015** - Tracy Cresswell (Health Watch) and Sister Barbara Douglas (Clinical Nurse Manager, Rheumatology RWT)

**July 2015** - Tiggy Fashions (House of Fraser)

May I take this opportunity to thank Sheila Fardoe for her hard work raising funds with the raffles at our coffee mornings, Brian Knibbs Tony Sankey and Dereck Allen for their voluntary work dealing with refreshments and general duties that befall upon them.

Balbir Rai for hosting and greeting members and Bhagwant Sachdeva for running the bring and buy stall.

**Objective: Engagement with our Members**

Personal one to one interaction is obviously the best way to engage with our membership but for a significant proportion of our members; attending the coffee mornings is impossible. For the past 2 years we have operated the Buddy Scheme and all new members are nominated a buddy to relate to. The scheme is very successful allowing the individual member to interact with the nominated buddy. The scheme is constantly reviewed and we will certainly continue over the next year hopefully with more volunteers from our membership acting as buddies. The scheme operates a strict policy with guidelines for buddies.

**Bi Monthly WRSG Newsletter**

The **WRSG Newsletter** continues to be the universal method of engaging with our membership. The Newsletter is

published every two months and reaches all of our members.

The content of the Newsletters include reports of visiting speakers so that those members who are unable to attend our meetings can benefit with current issues relating to Arthritis.

**Jane James Dementia Awareness**

gave a very interesting report on her visit raising awareness in Wolverhampton so that we are a Dementia friendly City. Dementia isn't something that many of want to think about, it's scary and the first images that come to mind are negative ones. Jane continued with explaining that Dementia is caused by diseases of the brain, it is an umbrella term and there are over 100 of these diseases Alzheimer's being the most common, Jane continued with the importance of early diagnosis and help available.

**Barbara Douglas (Clinical Nurse Manager Rheumatology RWT)**

Barbara submitted her article for the Newsletter telling us of her Nursing background and of her passion for Rheumatology. Her experience spans over 25 years initially starting at Cannock Chase Hospital in the newly developed Rheumatology unit. Barbara shared her vision for Rheumatology in Wolverhampton and Cannock we are living in exciting times and potentially we will become one of the largest Rheumatology centres in the West Midlands and receive first class care.

**Gill Weedon (National Rheumatoid Arthritis Society NRAS)**

A very interesting article from Gill. NRAS are the only patient led charity which specifically supports people living with Rheumatoid Arthritis. Their aim is working for a better life for people living with Rheumatoid Arthritis. NRAS provide information, support and advocacy.

Raise Awareness; Campaign;  
Encourage better disease self-  
management;  
Provide a one stop shop for people with  
RA;

The WRSG hope to work more closely  
with NRAS particularly in the field of  
self-management education. The  
NRAS have a link on our WRSG  
Website.

#### **Tracy Creswell (Health Watch)**

Tracy came along to our coffee morning  
and talked about Health Watch which is  
an independent service, to make sure  
you can have your say about your  
health care and social care. If you have  
concerns or suggestions to improve the  
services in Wolverhampton Health  
Watch will listen and investigate on your  
behalf.

Details of the service were listed in the  
July Newsletter.

#### **Sharon Sidhu (Redesign of Muscle, Bone and Joint Services (MSK) I**

have given a report of Sharon's  
important visit to us in the Newsletter.  
Consultation upon the redesign of MSK  
services are of much importance to our  
members and we were encouraged to  
talk about our experiences good and  
bad. Early feedback from patients has  
been that they want access to services  
in one place with the technology and  
support services needed, better  
information and education for patients;  
improved communication across health  
professionals; access to alternative  
therapies and group therapy, clear  
informative treatment plans and better  
accessibility.

The consultation period is now  
completed and the procurement of  
services are now in progress.

#### **Information**

The newsletter has also given important  
information re:

Blue Badge Holders; Personal  
Independence Payment (PIP);- One  
Voice for Disabled

Road closure and Disabled parking City  
centre; Walking for Health; Gas Safety  
Checks;-

Wolverhampton Information Network  
(WIN);- Bus Route Cannock Hospital;-  
Rheumatology Department Nurse  
Advice Line;- Support for carers in  
Wolverhampton

Life Direct;-Travel Insurance; Clued up  
event re the Care Act 2014;-

Digital Life at the Lighthouse Theatre

#### **Engagement with the Wolverhampton Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG)**

Both Pat Jones and I have represented  
the WRSG at the CCG meetings over  
the past Year. We have been involved  
in consultation of;-

Breaking down the Boundaries to Better  
Care (The Better Care Fund); MSK  
Consultation

Plans for Urgent and Emergency Care  
Services;- Patient Participation Groups  
PPG);-

Care Services in Wolverhampton

I have also been invited to act as a  
patient representative by the CCG in  
the Procurement process of MSK  
services and I have accepted on your  
behalf.

#### **Engagement with the Rheumatoid User Group (RUG) Cannock**

Again Pat Jones and I have represented you  
at one meeting of the RUG group to  
which we were kindly invited, we were  
introduced to many of the staff in the  
Rheumatology Unit at  
Cannock Hospital and made to feel very  
welcome. I did have the opportunity to  
talk about the work of the WRSG and  
our membership.

Agenda Items included were: -

Rheumatology Unit New Build;-

Clinical Nurse Specialists

(Community);- Musculoskeletal

Integrated care Services;

Specialist Clinical Nurse Appointment

(Paediatric Rheumatology)

### **WRSG Web site [www.wrsg.org.uk](http://www.wrsg.org.uk)**

Thank you to Martin Peake who very kindly manages our web site and reaches a larger audience, over this past year we have had more than ever enquiries about our group and as a consequence recruited more new members via this route.

Martin advertises all of the Newsletters and a diary of forthcoming events.

### **WRSG Help Line/Buddy Scheme**

Pat Jones and I still operate the help line which is always open to our members but we tend to get more email type enquiries and also the WRSG Buddy scheme is working well resulting in more support to new members.

### **Education and Information**

The WRSG were offered £3000 from David Loughton (Chief Executive RWT) to host a Challenging Arthritis Course supplied by Arthritis Care. Unfortunately after the course was organised for our members Arthritis Care were unable to deliver following the redundancy of all West Midlands staff

Arthritis Care in response to our queries are unable to help us at this time. I have made enquiries via the CCG as to whether Wolverhampton CCG could commission a course for chronic long term conditions that we could be a part of. I will keep you informed of events. In the meantime we will do our best to facilitate sessions as part of our coffee mornings.

### **Grants and Donations**

**St Johns Church in the Square;** Our friends at St Johns have raised £240 for our group with coffee mornings and the sale of Cards. Thank you to Ann Evans for her support.

**Mrs G Turton;** Thank you to Mrs Turton for her very generous donation to the group of £300

**Small Amounts £20;**

**Lloyds Bank;** Raised £2000 for our group nominated by Mrs Kate Weston and voting in Wolverhampton  
**Express and Star;** Collecting coupons in the Express and Star raised £229.94  
**Social Interaction**

**WRSG Outings and Holidays;** Mary Allen organised lots of trips this past year which were thoroughly enjoyable.  
**February 2015** Mystery trip and Meal;-  
**March 2015** Cosford Air Museum  
**April 2015** Spring Saunter Trentham Gardens and Lunch;- **July 2015** Strawberry Cream Tea

Pat Jones and her husband Les opened up their beautiful home and gardens for the WRSG members to celebrate our twenty one years. We had a strawberry cream tea with cakes and sandwiches. Such a beautiful afternoon the weather was perfect. Our special guests were Peter Boneham and his daughter to represent Carol Boneham our founder Chairperson. We were also delighted to welcome Sister Ruth Harper from The Rheumatology Department, Ruth has been a member since the group began and knows many of our members.

### **Tinsel and Turkey Holiday 2014**

Joyce Knibbs organised our Tinsel and Turkey holiday at a Warner's Hotel (Sinah Warren) in Hayling Island. Everyone so enjoyed this break, Kath, Tony and Joyce and Jan went on a trip to Portsmouth and went to the top of the Spinnaker. Our meals, entertainment and accommodation was first class.

### **In conclusion**

We have had another very busy and successful year, may I take this opportunity to say thank you to everyone who has contributed their time and expertise to the WRSG without you it wouldn't be possible. Thank you to our President Dr Paul Newton and Vice President Dr Josh Dixey for their continuing support, and to our professional speakers for their valuable input.

Thank you to the WRSG Committee who have worked tirelessly this past year and also to Tony Sankey, Derek Allen and Brian Knibbs who are so supportive at our coffee mornings... And finally to you our members, thank you for supporting us, your motivation, friendship and commitment to the WRSG are the reason for our success.

### **Liz Walker (Chairperson WRSG)**

**September 2015**

*Following the report Pauline Callaghan thanked the committee for producing the Newsletter, saying it was very welcome and good to have something to read instead of having to rely on the internet.*

**6. Treasurers Report; Jan Simpson read out the Treasurers report on behalf of Kath Sankey. (see enclosed with this Newsletter)**

### **7. Dr Paul Newton; President and Rheumatology Consultant**

Dr Newton thanked the group for inviting him to our AGM saying everyone would be pleased to hear he was only going to say a few words. Dr Newton advised the group that he was still getting used to being retired although it was nice not to have to get up and go out to work in bad weather, he was still trying to get his head around having spare time. He has noticed that he thinks about the past more since his retirement at the end of 2014, and has a different perspective on life; Dr Newton then said that because I am no longer in on the action, so to speak, I feel it is the right time to hand over the position of President because any news I now

have about the rheumatology unit and Hospitals is second hand. Over the past 21 years WRSG has been there to support members and also given me support. I found it was very welcome to have to fall back on, knowing that someone was there to jump up and down supporting me when I asking for things for the rheumatology patients. I am very happy to be handing over the post to Dr Dixey, he will be in a position to keep the group fully informed of future plans and developments. Thank you for your support.

### **8. Dr Josh Dixey; Vice President and Rheumatology Consultant**

Many thanks for asking me to be President. Clearly this has been a successful year for the WRSG. You have all been very active and your fund raising is very good, congratulations. I would also like to thank you for supporting New Cross and Cannock hospital. I must say a few words about Paul, he is a very hard act to follow. Paul is missed by me, colleagues and patients. Paul is a man of incredible common sense. Patients always speak extremely well of Paul. I am delighted he has accepted to be honorary vice-president. I enjoyed a wonderful 6.5 years of being colleagues and Paul pointing me in the right direction.

New Cross took over Cannock hospital 01 October 2014. We inherited an extra good Rheumatology Arthritis Unit at Cannock and must work hard to keep its good name.

It has been said we are the largest in the West Midlands, however, we are actually the largest in the Midlands, not just West Midlands. We have met with some challenges along the way, some are opposed to change, new working practises, I believe it will take about 12 months to settle down. Who goes

where? You may notice changes over the next few years. I can squash a rumour, New Cross Rheumatology Unit will not shut. Day therapy treatment may move to Cannock, but not for existing patients.

I am told the New Rheumatology Unit at Cannock is a very large and vibrant unit (purple & yellow I think) with 21 beds and wonderful staff in the department. We have recruited 4 new consultants for rheumatoid and Osteoarthritis, Dr Bateman, Dr Sapkota, Dr Raizada and Dr George Hirsch. With these new top class appointments the department will become greater still. I have been in Wolverhampton for 6.5 years and have been very impressed, what with the University and Medical Centre which works closely with our department.

Cannock Research Centre is excellent, particularly in drugs, which is good news. This is a nationally exciting time in Rheumatology, there are more and more new drugs, things will get better. The down side is that drugs are expensive and because of guidelines NICE, who provide the funds, limit us a bit on what we spend. I think it's a good that WRSG have already been involved in planning and have met with RUG, the Cannock Rheumatology Group. I should add WRSG is a much bigger group.

I am very flattered to become President of WRSG. Thank You. 21 years is a wonderful achievement for a charity group. Please keep giving us feedback and telling us what you would like to see happening to improve our service.

#### **9. Liz invited Rob Marris to say a few words**

Rob echoed the thanks to the group, saying it was unusual for a voluntary group to survive 21 years and to have 30% of members to attend the AGM some other members cannot physically get here. Well done. Rob went on to pay a personal tribute to Dr Paul Newton, saying what a wonderful man Paul is, it has been a pleasure to have known him over the years. Great Man and a Great Doctor. Thank you all.

On behalf of everyone in WRSG, Pat Jones thanked Liz for her continuing hard work as chairperson, especially in light of her own personal difficult year health wise.

A Bouquet was presented to Liz.

#### **Close of Meeting**

The views expressed in this Newsletter are not necessarily endorsed by the editor.



## **COFFEE / INFORMATION SESSIONS – DATES FOR YOUR DIARY 2016**

**Monday 04 January 16**

**Monday 01 February 16**

**Monday 07 March 16**

**Monday 04 April 16**

**Gifts**

**Monday 16 May 16**

**Meal**

**Monday 13 June 16**

**Monday 04 July 16**

**Monday 05 September 16**

**Monday 03 October 16**

**Monday 07 November 16 - Christmas**

**Monday 05 December 16 – Christmas**

**Monday 19 September - AGM**

The information regarding the subject / guest speakers will be printed in the News Letters.