

Swindon Parkinson's Activity Group

Proudly supporting those effected by Parkinson's in the Swindon Area since 1978.

Formerly Swindon Parkinson's Branch

honoured with the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service in 2018



The Swindon Parkin Lot May/June 2026 Newsletter 3

Editor: Kerry Hartman Email: splnews2024@gmail.com

Dear Friends,

Summer is coming so dust down the deck chairs, pour out the Pimm's and take a look at what we can offer you all. This newsletter is packed full of events, past, present and future. We welcome 3 more volunteers to the SPAG team (page 5). Note the QR code created by Hannah Spawls, our local Volunteer officer, which takes you to the SPAG website and should appear on future posters etc.

Neil Fallon, one of our Parkies poets and walking heroes has set himself another walking challenge this May (Page 13) and has some breaking news on page 14. There is a lot of emphasis on the 'Carers Role' and a very interesting insight on pages 15 &16.

In these newsletters we try and cover a variety of topics, keep you informed of events and activities as well as reviews and other items that may be of interest. However, we can't always cover everything so please contact me if you would like me to research something specifically, or indeed you have something you would like to write and include. This is a newsletter for all our members so you can have your say, just let me know by emailing me at splnews2024@gmail.com. Deadline for inclusion in the next newsletter (July/August 2026) is Wednesday 26th June. As this is bi-monthly please check website for updates in between publications. *Kerry Hartman Editor*

IMPORTANT MESSAGE FROM RACHEL GARDNER - LEAD PD NURSE SPECIALIST

'I am pleased to let you all know that **from 18th May** the PDNS team will have a permanent clinic space at the **Moredon Medical Centre, Moredon Road, Swindon SN2 2JG**.

There is parking there for you, we are based on the ground floor to the left of reception.

Please take a seat and the PDNS will call you in when they are ready.

Check your appointment letters as the joint clinics will continue on Thursdays in SWICC

***NOTE: No Exercise Classes at the Grange Wednesday 6th May**

May 2026	Event	Page
Mon 18 th	Walking Football - Supermarine, 10.45am	3,8
Mon 18 th	Singing for Fun - Des Moffat centre, 2pm	3
Mon 25 th May	Duck Race Westcott Rec Park 11am – 4pm	6
Tue 5 th	Parkies Pals Shrivenham Park Golf Club 10am–12	3,11
Tue 5 th 12 th 19 th 26 th	Seated Exercise classes The Grange LC	3
Tues 12 th	Walking Football – Roger Youldon Trophy Match 10.45 for 11am kick off	8
*Wed 13 th 20 th 27 th	Balance & Exercise classes The Grange	3
Wed 20 th	The Cricklade Cafe Cricklade House Hotel & Spa 10.30am–12noon	3
Wed 27 th	Coffee and Cake Social Gorse Hill 10am–12noon	3
Thu 14 th	Together with Parkinson's Gorse Hill 10.45am– 12.30pm	3,6,11,12
Thu 7 th 14 th 21 st 28 th	Tai Chi Neuro Wellbeing Centre, Westmead 2pm & 3.15pm	3
Thu 7 th 14 th	Movement to Music 12.30pm-1.30pm	3,4,11
Fri 1 st 8 th 15 th 22 nd 29 th	Walking Tennis Gerard Buxton Sports Ground 1.30pm– 2.30pm	3,13
June 2026		
Mon 1 st 8 th 15 th 22 nd 29 th	Walking Football - Supermarine, 10.45am	3,8
Mon 1 st 15 th	Singing for Fun - Des Moffat centre, 2pm	3
Tue 2 nd 9 th 16 th 23 rd 30 th	Seated Exercise classes The Grange LC	3
Tue 2 nd	Parkies Pals Shrivenham Park Golf Club 10am–12	3,11
Wed 3 rd 10 th 17 th 24 th	Balance & Exercise classes The Grange	3
Wed 17 th	The Cricklade Cafe Cricklade House Hotel & Spa 10.30am–12noon	3
Wed 24 th	Coffee and Cake Social Gorse Hill 10am–12noon	3
Wed 3 rd	Fish & Chips quiz – Hook Village Hall 4pm	7
Thu 4 th	Parkies and Partners. Gerard Buxton Sports Ground 2pm – 4pm	7,9
Thu 11 th	Together with Parkinson's Gorse Hill 10.45am– 12.30pm	3,6,11,12
Thu 4 th 11 th 18 th 25 th	Tai Chi Neuro Wellbeing Centre, Westmead 2pm & 3.15pm	3
Thu 4 th 11 th 18 th 25 th	Movement to Music 12.30pm–1.30pm	3,4,11
Fri 5 th 12 th 19 th 26 th	Walking Tennis Gerard Buxton Sports Ground 1,30pm – 2.30pm	3,13

Regular Activities available free to members of Swindon Parkinson's Activity Group. Check website for details or email:

gfallon.parkinsons.swindon@gmail.com

Monday 10.45-12noon weekly Swindome Stadium Supermarine SN3 4BZ	Walking Football	Neil Scott Fallon 07504 851 672 taff.hammer@yahoo.co.uk
Mondays 2pm 1 st & 3 rd monthly Des Moffat Western Community Centre Somerset Rd SN2 1NF	Singing For Fun	Kathy Hobson 07923 473 261 hobsonkathy3@gmail.com
Tuesdays 2pm weekly The Grange Leisure and Community Centre, Grange Drive SN3 4JY	Seated Exercise Classes	Linda Barrett 07876 068 500 lindaj19@hotmail.co.uk
Wednesday weekly 1pm–1.45pm, 2pm–2.45pm, 3pm–3.45pm The Grange	Balance & Exercise Classes	Linda Barrett 07876 068 500 lindaj19@hotmail.co.uk
Thursdays weekly 2pm & 3.15pm Neuro Wellbeing Centre, Westmead Westmead Drive SN5 7ER	Tai Chi	Neil Scott Fallon 07504 851 672 taff.hammer@yahoo.co.uk
Thursdays 12.30pm weekly Neuro Wellbeing Centre Term time only	Movement to Music	Sarah Fletcher 01793 601700 sarah.fletcher@swindondance.org.uk
Fridays 1.30pm-2.30pm Gerard Buxton Sports Ground Term time only	Walking Tennis	Dawn Mulrain dawn.jarvis2@btinternet.com 01666 860 845



Parkinson's Regular Social Cafes – all welcome – no booking required



Parkies Pals meet 1st Tuesday of the month 10am–12noon
Shrivenham Park Golf Club, Pennyhooks Lane SN6 8EX
£3 to cover coffee and cake. Kerry Hartman ParkiesPals@outlook.com 07875 416 236

The Cricklade Café meet 3rd Wednesday in the month 10.30am–12noon
Cricklade House Hotel and Spa, Common Hill, Cricklade SN6 6HA
ParkinsonsCafeCricklade@gmail.com

Parkinson's Coffee & Cake Social meet 4th Wednesday of the month 10am–12noon
Gorse Hill Community Centre, Chapel Hill SN2 8DA
sharonfulcher@apl.com 07958 165 423

Together with Parkinson's meet 2nd Thursday of the month 10.45am–12.30pm
Gorse Hill Community Centre, Chapel Street SN2 8DA
Dee Vaughan dearymee66@gmail.com 07793 463 409



Our Movement to Music class waved farewell with cards and gifts to Abbie on the 19th March as she is taking maternity leave. Her baby is due around the end of April and I hope we will have photos to show you when that happy event takes place. Sarah will be taking over so no need to worry, our Movement to Music Class will continue.



300+ Club winners

March 2026

1st K Hartman

2nd J Cowley

Bonus £10 voucher: M&J Herne



April 2026

1st TBC

2nd TBC

Bonus £10 voucher: TBC

Join the 300+ club and you could be a winner

You've got to be in it to win it

Help boost our fundraising, support the group and get a chance to win every month by joining our 300+ club draw. For a stake of **£1 per number per month** your name could appear in our winner's grid above. If anybody would like to join, or buy more numbers, to further support the group please email Gail Fallon

gfallon.parkinsons.swindon@gmail.com to receive the documents that are required to set you up as a new member.

Website & Facebook



For any further information and details check out our website:

swindonparkinsons.org.uk or scan QR code

Or join our Facebook 'Swindon Parkinsons Activity Group' It's a quick, easy way to share group photos and friendship



You will need to answer the questions that appear, then our admin team can approve you. This is done because we are a private group, which means we do not allow advertising.

If you have any problems, please send an email to dearymee66@gmail.com and we can send you an invite.

Welcome to:



My name is Lauren Macdivitt and I am your Parkinson's UK Local Advisor. Covering Swindon and Wiltshire.

I can provide support for people who:

- Have just been diagnosed and are looking for advice and information.
- Are looking for tips on how to deal with the day-to-day impact of Parkinson's.
- Need support with caring for a partner, friend, or family member with Parkinson's.
- Need emotional support.
- Want to find out more about the services available in their area.
- Want to learn about their rights and entitlements.
- Would like help to navigate the benefits process.
- Would like information on where to find grants and financial help.
- Would like support on employment issues.
- Would like support with anything else relating to their life with Parkinson's.



If you would like to get in touch so I can support you, please use the details below: **Email: lmacdivitt@parkinsons.org.uk**

Telephone: 020 7963 3845 Kindest Regards, Lauren Macdivitt

Welcome to our new volunteer - Mick Hughes



Hi my name is Mick Hughes and I am a new member of the SPAG committee. I was diagnosed with Parkinsons November 2011.

I have been active in several groups but I mainly do the Walking football (when my skinny little legs let me.)

I was a flight simulator training engineer from 1977 to 2017.

After retiring I needed something to fill my time so I joined the UTC. I ran a quiz group and was a technical support for the Modern Technology group. I also joined the Wyvern theatre ushers and I am still doing that. I love to quiz, currently I attend 4 a week .

I do the walking football Monday morning and on Tuesday I am part of the Swindon Town Extra Time group, which is a multi-activity group for retired people. I still drive both cars and motorbikes

Mick Hughes

Welcome to our new Treasurer and returning volunteer - Sue Grice



Hello everyone, some of you will remember me when I was in the role of Membership Secretary. When my husband died I took time out for a few years but now feel ready to resume a role within the Parkinson's group. I live in Wootton Bassett with my partner Steve (soon to be husband), Poppy our cockapoo and Freddy the cat. I enjoy craft and spending time at our caravan in Sidmouth. I hope to catch up with many of you soon .

Sue Grice returning SPAG Volunteer and Treasurer



Welcome back also to Shirley Tucker who just rejoined the SPAG volunteers team after a brief absence.

What's Next?

Together with Parkinson's presents:

On: Thursday 14th May 2026

We welcome Merribells, a handbell ringing group from Swindon u3a.



Handbell ringing is fun and an excellent workout for the brain and coordination so come along and experience the sounds of the bells for yourselves.



Swindon u3a is a registered charity and part of a national organisation that offers many locally based activities ranging from art appreciation to playing the ukulele. See the website for more information: swindonu3a.org.uk

On: Thursday 11th June 2026

SAMARITANS

We welcome volunteers from Samaritans UK

They will be joining us for a friendly and informative session. They'll talk about the power of listening, emotional wellbeing, and where support can be found when life feels overwhelming. Their visit is a chance for us to learn more about the help available 24/7, and to ask questions in a relaxed, supportive setting. **Everyone is welcome.** It's an opportunity to strengthen our understanding, look out for one another, and hear directly from trained listeners who support people across the UK.

Need support? Call 116 123 to speak to a Samaritan

**Time: 10.45 – 12.30 At: Gorse Hill Community Centre SN2 8DA
£3 on entry for refreshments**

Rotary Club of Swindon Old Town
SWINDON'S FAMOUS Duck Race AND FAMILY DAY OUT 2026
All proceeds going to local charities
Bank Holiday Monday
25th May 11am to 4pm
WESTCOTT RECREATION PARK,
WOOTTON BASSETT ROAD,
SWINDON
SN1 4NQ
FACEBOOK.COM/SWINDONSFAMOUSDUCKRACE
OPEN FROM 11 AM
SOFT TOY TOMBOLA, CAKE STALL, CRAFT
FAIR, CHILDREN'S ACTIVITIES, CHARITY
STALLS, REFRESHMENT OUTLETS
DUCK RACE TICKETS £1
SIX PRIZES
FIRST PRIZE £1000
AND FIVE £100 PRIZES
DRAKES LOCAL
BUSINESS RACE 2.15PM
AND MAIN RACE 3.30PM

**Duck Race and Family Day out
Monday 25th May 11am to 4pm**

Once again our local Rotary Club of Swindon Old Town are supporting SPAG with their annual Duck Race and we are asking for help from you wonderful people, your friends and family. We need people to sell tickets and provide items for the tombola as well as come along and have fun.

DONATIONS PLEASE:

We are looking for donations of bottles of alcoholic and non-alcoholic bubbly/ bottles of bath/shower gels with or without bottle bags for our **Bubbles or bubbly** tombola at the duck race and hope to see you there. **Donations can be dropped off at any of the cafes or activities.** Thank you for all your support. Contact Dee Vaughan for tickets and offers of help dearymee66@gmail.com



Quiz with Fish & Chips Supper & Raffle



Wednesday 3rd June 4pm for 4.30pm start

Members £8 Guests £13
Closing date : Wednesday 27th May
At Hook Village Hall, 3 Hook Street,
Royal Wootton Bassett, SN4 8EF

Fish & chips are from China Chef – voted Trip Advisor Travellers Choice 2024
David Roblin will run the quiz again this year!

We are looking for one person to help David add up the scores and a couple of people to help with refreshments. Tables of 6 max. Raffle prizes welcome

To book – contact Dawn Mulrain on 07748 632 779

Payment can be made by cheque payable to Swindon Parkinson's and sent to:

Mrs D Mulrain, Chapel House, Sawyers Hill, Minety, SN16 9QL
or to Barclays Bank Account : The Parkinsons Disease society of the United Kingdom. Sort Code 20-00-00 Account 93616452
Please reference with your surname/fish

Parkies and Partners

Gerard Buxton Sports Ground, Brinkworth Road, Wiltshire, SN4 8DS

We will start by sharing a cup of tea and a biscuit and a chat before the Carers move to a separate room for a peer support session, during which we will sit in small groups to share experiences and knowledge. During this time those living with Parkinson's will take part in activities run by our volunteers and we are planning to secure some outside support to enable us to offer a wider range of activities for this group. We welcome suggestions from attendees on topics that would particularly interest you.'

We meet quarterly 2-4pm. The dates for 2026 are:

- **Thursday 4th June**
- **Thursday 3rd September**
- **Thursday 3rd December**

No booking is necessary, please just come along on the day and meet our friendly group.

For any information, please call Dawn Mulrain on 01666 860 845 / 07748 632 779

Dawn.jarvis2@btinternet.com



SPAG Members Lunch Friday 12noon on 12th June at Northstar College

Seats are limited so booking essential. Look out for further details and contact Dee Vaughan 07793 463409

Tuesday 12th May: Annual Walking Football Match

The Shakers (team of Parkies and reigning Champions) Vs The Sparks (Team of Parkinson's health professionals) play for the prestigious Roger Youldon Trophy. Come



along and support you footballing heroes at **Supermarine**

10.45 for 11am kick off.

There will be cake!

Saturday 6th June

Look out for more details from Neil Fallon regarding this exciting Festival



Join us for

Parkinson's Walking Footie Festival 2026

Saturday 6 June 2026 10am - 2.30pm
Portishead Town Football Club

Join us for our first South West Parkinson's Walking Football Festival. Come and support the players, join in the family fun and find out more about Walking Football and Parkinson's.

No need to book, just turn up!

For more info contact: htaylor-feld@parkinsons.org.uk

BOOGIE and BAKES - limited tickets available



With fabulous guitarist and singer Tony M.

Step back in time with the sounds of the 50s, 60s, 70s and 80s. Served with a side of tea, cake, and community cheer.

Dress to impress. Special 'Tea'-mendous raffle

All welcome **£10 per person**

Tickets must be purchased in advance as numbers are restricted.

For more details contact

Kerry Hartman ParkiesPals@outlook.com or mobile 07875 416 236

All profits from ticket sales will go to SPAG to benefit us all

NOTE: **Tickets are selling fast so email me at**

ParkiesPals@outlook.com with name and number required.

The set up will be tables of 8, so please say if you wish to make up a table. Enjoy the vibes across the decades whether you are sitting or dancing, Tony M is amazing and Sharon Fulcher is providing the bakeswhat else can I say?

Kerry Hartman Editor, Volunteer, Parkies Pals

Focus on Parkies and Partners

Parkies & Partners: Thursday 5th March saw the launch of the new look Parkies & Partners Group which runs 4 times a year from 2-4pm at the Gerard Buxton Sports Centre. Many of us, despite carrying out the role of caring for our loved ones, do not like the title of 'Carer' hence the rebranding! The venue is ideal with plenty of free parking and level access so enabling all of our members to easy entry to the building. The friendly team provides teas and coffees along with biscuits!

The format is to spend around 30 minutes with everyone together after which the Partners move to a separate space to share experiences, top tips, and make friends. Discussions centre on

whatever is uppermost in our minds at the session. For example:



Have you thought about applying for a blue badge? How do you go about it? Is there anyone in the organisation who can help?

Is getting into or out of the car, the chair, the bed becoming more challenging? How have others in the group handled this?

Is eating or drinking becoming more challenging? What support is there out there?

Do other members of the group have tips when looking for respite care? How can PUK help us? Has anyone taken part in trials and what has this involved?

There are so many useful things that we can learn from one another and in many cases we do not know what we do not know until someone else mentions it! The group is an invaluable source of information. Why not come along and give us a try in June (see page 7 for further details).

And of course whilst we are networking our Parkies are being entertained by our wonderful volunteers, it may be a quiz, a podcast or some games, it may be a chat or a singsong. Each session is different and we are always keen to introduce new things into the programme so please say if you would like to do something in particular.

We would love to welcome you along to our friendly group. Please contact me if you have any questions. Dawn Mulrain 07748 632 779.

Neil Fallon (SPAG Volunteer and roving poet) summed up the first session of Parkies and Partners in this poem of Tea, Truths and togetherness;

*At dawn's first blush, the paths awoke,
Where Parkies came and Partners spoke,
Beneath the boughs of RWB's hall,
A meeting kind and welcoming all
With tea that steamed and biscuits galore,
Dawn and Gail weathered the storm,
Of questions asked, and with wisdom clear,
They listened closely and held them dear.*

*While Dee, Graham, Mick and I stood near,
With quiz in hand and laughter clear,
Our Parkies bright with minds alight,
Shared thoughts, jokes and stories alike.
A podcast hummed with stories true,
Of walks once taken, skies once blue,
Of hopes exchanged and battles faced,
Each voice a thread in courage laced.*

*And then our sponsors, warm, sincere,
Dave and Kerry, kind of heart and cheer.
Not just guests, but guiding hands,
Supporting us across the land.
Their quiet gift, both bold and sweet,
Makes these rare gatherings complete.
For more than facts or plans or schemes,
It's fellowship that fuels our dreams.*

*Where every smile, each knowing glance,
Builds bridges through a shared expanse.
So here's to tea and trust, and ties,
To searching looks and truthful eyes.
At Parkies and Partners, where hearts convene,
We grow not just in mind but mean.
Parkies and Partners, hand in hand,
Togetherness is how we stand.*



Past events reviewed

The “United In Song” benefit concert for Swindon Parkinson’s Activity Group,

‘an uplifting and memorable evening. Held at St Paul’s Church and Community Centre, the event brought together the wonderful talents of the Swindon Male Voice Choir and the Thamesdown Ladies Choir for a performance that was both moving and inspiring.



The concert showcased not only musical excellence but also a strong sense of community spirit. The choirs performed beautifully under the direction of Kirstie Smith and Shelley Morgan, delivering a varied and enjoyable programme. The evening was a great success, and it was clear how much effort and rehearsal had gone into organising this annual event. Most importantly, it helped raise awareness of Parkinson’s while also raising over £700 for SPAG, enabling us to continue funding future activities.



An enormous thank you goes to everyone who contributed to the success of the evening — the performers, organisers, volunteers, and all those who attended and showed their support. Your generosity and enthusiasm made the night truly special. A special thanks to Geordie Smith from SMVC for organising the printing of flyers, tickets and programs. *Graham and Dee Vaughan*

Swindon Parkinson’s Bingo & Raffle Night – 28th February

SPAG members enjoyed a fantastic evening at the Swindon Parkinson’s Bingo & Raffle Night, held at the North Swindon Club. The event was a great success, with a packed venue and a lively, welcoming atmosphere. The night was exceptionally well organised and featured an array of amazing raffle prizes. The event was kindly hosted by two wonderful sisters, Catherine and Annie, whose hard work and dedication made the evening so special.

A total of 17 SPAG members attended, joining in with the fun, laughter, and friendly competition. It was a truly enjoyable night for everyone involved, bringing people together in great spirits. To top off the evening, SPAG was delighted to receive an incredible £1,250, a testament to the generosity and support of everyone who contributed. Overall, it was a



memorable and uplifting event, and we extend our sincere thanks to Catherine, Annie, and all who helped make the night such a success.

Gail Fallon



Together with Parkinson's

March guests :



Sarah Fletcher and Abbie came along to this session in March and Sarah and Izzy came to Parkies Pals café in April. They demonstrated the power of music and movement and got everyone 'flying kites' and expressing themselves with simple dance moves. A fabulous program of events.



Swindon Parkinsons Activity Group



WHAT TO EXPECT?

Join us for a warm and welcoming weekly movement classes brought to you by Swindon Dance. These sessions are specifically designed to support those living with Parkinsons. You will receive gentle and supportive guidance through yoga postures and dance sequences, finding creativity and freedom in your movement. Variations and adaptations of exercises are given to suit individual needs. This class can also be done seated or standing so there is something for everyone to enjoy.

After the session we welcome you to join us for a chit chat and some refreshments!

When:

Every Thursday during term time
from 12:30pm-1:30pm.

**For more information please
contact:**

Sarah.Fletcher@swindondance.org
.uk

Where:

Neuro Wellbeing Centre,
Bradbury House, Westmead Dr,
Westmead, Swindon
SN5 7ER



April guests were Wiltshire Farm Foods (WFF) :

WILTSHIRE

EST. **FARM** 1991

FOODS

Charlotte from WFF set up and soon some delicious smells were wafting around, making us feel very hungry.

She told us all about the company, that it is now nationwide but

started in Wiltshire in 1991 and that the food is delivered to your door. After an interesting and informative talk we were invited to taste some of the samples that were beautifully presented. About 8 hot meals were laid out, with little dishes and forks to help ourselves. I think everyone had an opportunity to try a good selection and I think everyone was very impressed. Contact them directly for further information at www.wiltshirefarmfoods.com

Dee Vaughan



6 or



World Parkinson's Day

Stand at the Swindon Central library



A few of us stood in the foyer of Swindon central library on World Parkinson's Day. Not exactly rushed off our feet but we did our bit to raise awareness. A few people did take leaflets and a specialist in dementia and neurological conditions gave Dee his details and may come along and talk a group. To my mind even if we help one lonely person manage Parkinson's we've succeeded.

Putting for Parkinson's

Fabulous afternoon at Parkies pals and Shrevenham Social Putters 'Putting for Parkinson's' afternoon on 17th April. This is now becoming a popular regular event. Rain kept away. Cakes eaten, putters played and prizes won. Parkies pals putting champions were ; 3rd place medal to Mike Read, 2nd place medal to David Logan who was pipped to the post for 1st place medal and shield by Margaret Disney. Great fun, thank you to everyone who ventured out and braved the potholes and roadworks.

£100 made on the Raffle for SPAG. Here's to next year. Can always practice at a summer Parkies pals cafe on first Tuesdays of the month!

Kerry Hartman Volunteer and founder of Parkies Pals



Parkinson's Awareness with Home Instead

Ian and Heather Davey shares their Parkinson's story and how carers who understands Parkinson's are so important. A very honest and positive video, check it out on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/share/v/18HPWTfgE5/>



if you would like to talk to **Home Instead** about their caring resources contact :

Cat Attewell, Community Engagement Officer, Home instead Swindon & Vale of the white Horse. 01793 232585 or email cat.attewell@homeinstead.co.uk
www.homeinstead.co.uk

Spotlight on Walking Tennis

Well who would believe it our Walking Tennis Group has now been running for just over a year! When I set this group up I expected that we would have several months when play would not be possible, due to inclement weather, but we have managed to play nearly the whole year through!

The group have been benefitting from the talent and patience of Jon Bastin, our coach and friend, who has successfully taken a group of keen participants and transformed us. Everyone has improved their play and enjoy turning up each week to take part. We start with warm up exercises, loosening up muscles and getting that hand eye coordination working and then move on to playing over the nets. As with all exercises the concentration needed means that many of the members symptoms take a back seat whilst playing, a remarkable improvement can be seen in motor issues and of course we are using our brains too .. a win, win situation!



If you are interested in coming along to see what we do then give me a call. Dawn Mulrain 07748 632779. We meet at The Gerard Buxton Sports Ground in Royal Wootton Bassett on Friday afternoons from 1.30-2.30pm.



Walk 'another' 100 miles in May challenge.

'I will be taking part in this year's Parkinson's UK 'Walk 100 miles in May' challenge. All money raised will support the Parkinson's UK Nurse Appeal, which is helping fund more specialist roles across the UK.

This will be my 5th year of walking challenges; I will be very appreciative of your support again in sponsoring me. I try my best to do some miles every day, but with health conditions this can be a struggle. However, I have persevered every year and always succeeded in completing the challenge. A sense of humour always helps so I will be wearing a different hat each day, look out for my Facebook posts.

Sponsorship can be done online – <https://events.parkinsons.org.uk/s/7703/52210> or in person when I see you at events or activities.

Thanks for being an amazing group.' *Neil Fallon - volunteer*



Spoiler Alert

Poetry Book

Over the years I have shared some of my poetry with the group, which has been well received. Many of you have asked for, or suggested, I write a book.

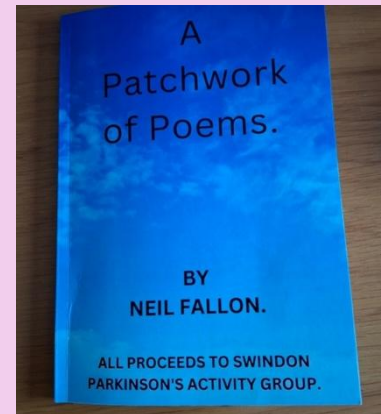
I am pleased to announce that with the support and sponsorship of Steve Coles & Sue Grice, for which I am very grateful, my first poetry book, titled a 'A Patchwork of Poems,' will be available to purchase from May. ALL proceeds will be donated to SPAG.

I hope you will enjoy the book and if you like this one, I have plenty more poems to share

Neil Fallon Volunteer and walking poet

Spoiler Alert

Spoiler Alert



What's the Buzz? Beechband latest

For those of you that have not heard of it before a Beechband is a wearable device, a bit like a wrist watch, that can potentially reduce or relieve several Parkinson's symptoms; mobility, stability, tremor, anxiety, drooling, speech etc by using a gentle pulse.

SPAG decided that in order to enable our members to "try before you buy" they would buy four of the *Version 1* bands to loan out to members in return for the completion of a simple feedback form. The units were loaned out to a number members and their completed forms enabled us to identify a number of issues with the original design; the unit was too noisy, the strap was fiddly, there was no charge light to know when it was fully charged. These issues were also identified by other users around the country and as a result the Beechband team produced *Version 2* which addresses all of these issues.



SPAG have now purchased a number of the Version 2 units which are currently out on loan. If you would like to try one of the loan bands out please contact Mike Mulrain - 07802 757560 or Mike.mulrain@yahoo.co.uk to get your name on the list. If you tried Version 1 and would like to try the new version then please also contact Mike. We loan each band out for a period of 6 weeks to enable you to have the optimum amount of time to see if it works for you. When you receive the band please fully read through the literature to ensure that you understand how to get the best from it. Mike is always at the end of the phone if you need any more support. Beechband have made a further small change to the very latest Beechband pack and from 31/3/26 the pack will be sent out with two straps; a regular strap and an elasticated strap, the cost of this version is £64.50 which includes P&P too.

Finally, due to our migration from Version 1 to Version 2 we now have a number of the Version 1 bands available to buy at the cost of £10 per unit. If you are getting on well with the Version 1 type and would like a spare unit this is a great way to get an extra band. If you are interested in purchasing one of these then let me know. *Thanks Mike Mulrain*



The Care Partner



The Care Partner: The Role No One Applies For

Parkinson's disease is often described as an individual diagnosis. One person sits in a neurologist's office and hears the words: Chronic. Incurable. Progressive. One name is written on the chart. One name on the pillbox label. One body becomes the focus of clinical attention but Parkinson's never belongs to just one person.

From the moment of diagnosis, a second role is created, usually without discussion, consent, or preparation, the role of care partner. Not a nurse. Not saviour. Not a sidekick. Something far more complex and far more human.

I say this not as an observer, but as someone who has lived with Parkinson's for over a decade. My disease has progressed, adapted, surprised me, and forced me to renegotiate my relationship with my own body. But alongside that journey has been another, quieter one, the evolution of the person who walks beside me.

Care partners rarely recognize themselves in the role at first. They are spouses, children, colleagues, and friends. They start by "helping out," filling in small gaps that appear almost imperceptibly: driving a little more, reminding a little more, and compensating quietly.

Over time, those gaps widen. What makes the role so difficult is that it is undefined. There is no training manual for how to help without diminishing. No checklist for when support becomes supervision. There is no clear line between loving assistance and unintended control.

From the inside, I can tell you this: the greatest challenge is not the physical care. It is the emotional calibration. Knowing when to step in—and when to step back.

Care partners carry an enormous cognitive and emotional load that is rarely acknowledged. They track symptoms. They anticipate fluctuations. They remember medication schedules, appointments, and subtle changes in mood or movement. They also absorb the fear. Fear of progression. Fear of the future. Fear of saying the wrong thing. Fear of being honest. Fear of being honest too soon. Fear of doing too much. Fear of not doing enough.

What often goes unseen is how much restraint this requires. How often care partners choose silence over correction. Patience over frustration. Strength over vulnerability. And yet, they are rarely asked how they are doing. From my perspective, the most meaningful care is not about doing things for someone—it is about preserving dignity with them.

Parkinson's already takes enough. It interferes with autonomy, confidence, and identity. When care is delivered without sensitivity, even with the best intentions, it can unintentionally accelerate those losses. The most effective care partners understand this intuitively. They offer support without spectacle. They collaborate rather than command. They allow room for independence—even when it would be easier to take over. This requires emotional intelligence, not instruction. Parkinson's does not just change the person with the diagnosis. It reshapes relationships.

Care partners grieve, too. They grieve the ease that once existed. The predictability. The unspoken assumptions about the future. They often do this privately, believing they must remain strong, positive, or encouraging but resilience is not silence.

Care partners need space to acknowledge their own fatigue, frustration, and fear—without guilt. Without feeling that doing so somehow detracts from the person with Parkinson's. It does not.

The best care partnerships I have seen, and experienced, are grounded in mutual respect. They are not hierarchical. They are adaptive. They evolve as the disease evolves. They are built on conversation, not assumption. On listening, not rescuing. On shared problem-solving, not unilateral decisions. Parkinson's may alter roles, but it does not erase personhood.

The individual with Parkinson's is still a partner, still a professional, still a decision-maker, still themselves. The care partner's role is not to replace that identity—but to protect it. If you are a care partner, know this: your role matters more than you may ever hear. Not because of what you do, but because of how you are present.

And if you are living with Parkinson's, as I am, take the time to recognize the person beside you—not just for their support, but for the quiet strength it takes to walk a road they did not choose but chose to stay on it with you.

Parkinson's is a shared journey. The diagnosis may belong to one of us - but the resilience belongs to both.

Article appeared in the HKC Foundation For Parkinson's newsletter January 2026 edition)

and is attributed to Larry sharing his personal experience. Editor's note: This article is longer than usual for the newsletter but it is such a powerful piece of writing I felt some of the impact would have been lost in condensing content.

Tips Parkies

Mobility Scheme The Motability Scheme

Every Cloud



March brought an unexpected shock for us when my husband was involved in a head-on collision with a boy racer.

Thankfully my husband walked away completely uninjured thanks to the airbags. Both cars, however, were written off and taken straight to



the accident recovery centre in Carterton. The police reviewed our dashcam footage, which showed exactly what happened: the other driver lost control on a bend and came straight into our lane. No blame on our side at all, which was a relief, but it didn't take away the biggest frustration to suddenly being without a car and navigating the long, slow process of insurance, settlement, and finding a replacement.



In the middle of all this, a fellow Parkie Pal mentioned something that turned out to be a real lifeline: the **Motability Scheme**. It's a Government run programme that allows disabled people to exchange a qualifying benefit for the lease of a car, powered wheelchair, or mobility scooter. I'd recently qualified for PIP and discovered I had the right level of mobility allowance, so we applied. The result is we're now awaiting delivery of a brand-new car, leased to us for three years. A huge weight off our minds.

If you'd like to know more, you can call **0300 456 4566** or visit the website:

<https://www.motability.co.uk/>

And finally, two lessons learned the hard way:

- 1. Install a dashcam.**
- 2. Listen to your friends** — they often know just the thing you need.

Kerry Hartman Editor

Parkinson's UK - Swindon & District Activity Group. Contact: hspawls@parkinsons.org.uk. It is a local Group of Parkinson's UK (PUK), and responsible for raising all funds to support those affected by Parkinson's in the Swindon and District area. The Group carries the same charity number as PUK which is the operating name of the Parkinson's Disease Society of the United Kingdom. A company limited by guarantee. Registered in England and Wales (258197) and in Scotland (SC037554)