



north wiltshire group

newsletter

The Queen's Award
for Voluntary Service

Welcome to the October issue of our Newsletter

Time for Change

Welcome to our Autumn newsletter. As you will see in the article on page 2, our Secretary, Barbara, and I are shortly stepping away from volunteering with the Association and will leave at the end of November. After 10 amazing years working together with our brilliant team, we feel that now is the time to make way for new people with new ideas.

We are delighted that our colleague Heather Smith, is taking over as Chair and Group Leader. Heather has just finished her 6-year term as an Association Trustee and brings a wealth of experience, knowledge and drive that make her the perfect leader.

As we say a very fond farewell and thank you for all your support for our work over the years, we wish Heather and the team every success for the future.

What a hard act to follow! Thank you, Alison, for such a lovely introduction. It will be quite a task to take forward the Group's work, but we have a powerful base to build on, thanks to you both. The tribute in this newsletter says it all about the huge legacy you leave behind. We know you won't be strangers to the group, and we all look forward to continuing our work supporting local people affected by MND.

Alison and Heather

Local support for local people

Farewell from Alison and Barbara!

After 10 years as Group Leader and Secretary, Alison Aviss and Barbara Crook have taken the decision to step away from volunteering with the Association and will be leaving us at the end of November.

Alison joined the Association as a visitor nearly 14 years ago and became Leader of North Wiltshire Group and Association Visitor Co-ordinator over 10 years ago. Both lost their Mums to MND and wanted to do something positive to help other families in similar situations. Alison first met Barbara when supporting her Mum and knew exactly where to look when a new Group secretary was needed! Thankfully, Barbara agreed to join the group and the rest is history!

Over the years, they introduced a more professional way of working that encouraged new volunteers to join and together the Group received the ultimate accolade of The Queens Award for Voluntary Service, the MBE for voluntary groups. We remain the only Group within the Association to have achieved this.

We are all delighted that Heather Smith is taking over leadership of the group and together with the team will continue the tireless work of supporting families affected by MND, raising funds and awareness, and campaigning for improved services.

Alison says 'My time with the Association has been amazing and I will always be immensely proud of what we have achieved locally. I have met some of the most inspirational families and it has been a privilege and honour to support them'.

Barbara says 'I feel grateful to have been involved with the Association and especially to be a member of the North Wiltshire Group for the last 10 years. Working together with a small but powerful and determined team has been truly rewarding and I am proud to say that together we've made a difference to the lives of those affected by MND'.

We all say, Farewell and a heartfelt Thank You to them both.



Alison and Barbara pictured at the Buckingham Palace Garden Party, representing the Group for our Award

Volunteering

Volunteering: are you ready?

In the last issue we talked about the benefits of volunteering for personal satisfaction and development. The members of our Group can all testify to those benefits.

However, we always seem to need new volunteers to help us take forward our shared vision. This is partly because our younger members often move away for work, while some of our more senior supporters are ready for a well earned retirement!

At the moment we particularly have gaps for:

- ♦ a 'social media master/mistress' to oversee our Facebook posts and tweets
- ♦ someone who enjoys providing admin support
- ♦ someone to lead our awareness-raising locally
- ♦ fundraiser to encourage local organisations to raise funds for the Group
- ♦ a treasurer (the hard work is done for us by the National Association)
- ♦ Association Visitors

We can offer full training and support. In addition, we are always very grateful for people who are prepared to organize a one-off fundraising activity, perhaps among their friends or colleagues.

If you think this is you or someone you know, we would love to hear from you. Please email us at info@mndnorthwiltshire.org.uk

Don't forget,
the North
Wiltshire
Group can
now accept
donations
by text.



**Text MNDWILTS to
70085
to donate £5**

to support MND North Wiltshire Group
helping local people with MND

Texts cost £5 plus one standard rate message

mnda
motor neurone disease
association

Registered Charity no. 294354

The advertisement features a dark blue background with a hand holding a smartphone on the right side. The text is in white and orange, providing contact information for text donations to support the MND North Wiltshire Group.

Fundraising

There seems to have been a lot of walking and running going on since the hot weather broke! - ed.

Walk to d'Feet MND

On 11th September Tash and husband Colin joined about 50 others for the Walk to d'Feet MND organised at Badminton Estate by the Gloucester Branch of the MNDA by kind invitation of the Duke and Duchess of Beaufort. This was a sponsored walk, with a choice of a long or short route. Billed as a 2km fully accessible walk, Tash and Colin covered 6km/10,000 steps in two hours. *(I think they chose the long route – ed.)*



The walkers

It was a lovely day in a beautiful location, with a chance to see the delightful walled garden. The event was rounded off with a mass picnic by the water (homemade cake was available!).

Back on the run!

Heather has been getting back out and about training for her various upcoming runs to support people affected by MND.

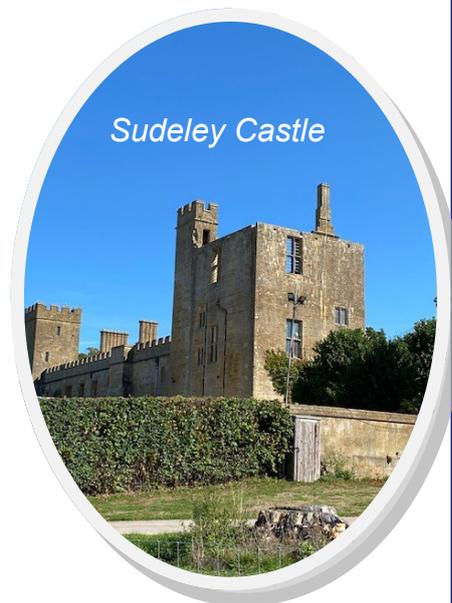
Heather said, "The weather in the summer months was at times far too hot for running, although I did keep some training up by setting off very early! Now we have some cooler weather so I am upping my distances and getting ready for the running challenges to come." She has completed a number of races during the year, and next up is the Oxford half marathon on 16th October.

Heather after the London 10km this July



Walking in support of Bel

On Saturday 17th September, Heather joined Bel Cornwell and her family and friends on a ramble around Sudeley Castle in Gloucestershire. Bel was diagnosed with MND 7 years ago. She has taken part in a series of walks to raise funds for Sue Ryder's Leckhampton Court Hospice where she attends the day hospice. 'I was asked to attend the walk by the Disabled Ramblers who have organised a range of walks for Bel. It was lovely to support someone from one of our neighbouring areas, and the weather was great too!'



If you would like to know more about the Disabled

Ramblers visit <https://disabledramblers.co.uk/>

For more about the Cornwell family's fundraising, see their **JustGiving** site <https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/cornwellfamily-sueryder>

People ask: What are Support Groups?

Each issue we advertise our **Support Groups** for people living with MND in Swindon and Wiltshire, but it is a while since we explained the what these groups are for.

Support Groups are informal, drop in events, which take place monthly from 2-4pm. They are designed to be a relaxed time for people living with MND to catch up with friends and chat over tea and cake. A carer/companion is always welcome. Our Carer Support Champion and Association Visitors will be there to host and chat, and they can answer questions.

We host groups in both Swindon and North Wiltshire so that no-one has too far to travel. We don't want transport to be a barrier, so let us know if you need help.

The Swindon group meets at The Lawns Community Centre, Guildford Avenue, Swindon. In North Wiltshire we have found a new home at The Riverside Centre, Bath Road, Melksham SN12 6LP. Contact your AV for details.

We also host a Carer Support Meeting designed to help carers with their challenging roles. Sometimes a speaker addresses practical questions; sometimes it is a more informal time to share. If you would like to be invited, contact Tash, our Carer Support Champion, at carersupport@mndnorthwiltshire.org.uk

Association News

MND Matters podcasts: the series continues

Sometimes emotional, sometimes humorous, always honest – **MND Matters** gives people affected by MND the chance to share their stories.

Episode 18 - Your signature is more powerful than you think

In this thought-provoking episode, Helen is joined by MND researchers Professor Majid Hafezparast, Dr Greig Joilin, Libby Moody and MND Association Branch volunteer, Hetty Smith. They all share the importance of gifts in Wills and the difference they have made to their work in research and care.



Debbie Hyslop, Legacy Marketing Officer at the MND Association, also joins us to explain what gifts in Wills are, dispel the myths around these gifts and share how you can write your Will for free with the MND Association.

More information about [gifts in Wills](#), the [gifts in Wills glossary](#), and the Association's [free Will-writing services](#) and [legacy events](#), can be found on the website. You can also contact the Association's Legacies Team by phone (01604 611 799) or email them at legacies@mndassociation.org

Episodes 1-17 remain available to listen to on your chosen podcast platform.

Christmas shopping

Helen (one of our Visitors) and friends are holding a Christmas shopping event at the Royal George pub in Purton on the evenings of **3rd, 4th and 5th November**. It will be a great opportunity to get those small gifts in a relaxed atmosphere, and will raise funds for the Group. Thanks to all involved, especially the publican.

It's a Lottery

Your fun on the Swindon Community Lottery helps to give the Group a regular income which we can invest in local people lwMND. Just go to www.swindonlottery.co.uk and select Motor Neurone as your good cause. Thank you.

Things to Know

Useful Contacts

N Wilts Group website
www.mndnorthwiltshire.org.uk
N Wilts Group contact
info@mndnorthwiltshire.org.uk
or phone MND Connect
Facebook <http://www.facebook.com/MNDNorthWiltshire>
Twitter @MNDNorthWilts
Letters will be forwarded from:
North Wiltshire Group, c/o MNDA,
PO Box 246, Northampton NN1 2PR
MND Connect 0808 802 6262
MNDA national website
www.mndassociation.org
MNDA Volunteering Team
01604 611681
MND Benefits Advice Service
0808 8010620
Prospect Hospice 01793 813355
Dorothy House 01225 722988

Support Meetings

Support Meetings are now face-to-face (Covid permitting):

The next **Swindon Support Meeting** at Lawns Community Centre, Guildford Avenue, Swindon is 2pm-4pm on **22nd November**

There will be **Wiltshire Support Group meetings** at Riverside Centre, Bath Road, Melksham SN12 6LP at 2pm-4pm on **19th November**

All are welcome to join us for a friendly chat, a catch up with friends, and to see your Visitor.

Meanwhile, you can still **contact your AVs** at

alisonaviss@mndnorthwiltshire.org.uk
anitacreamer@mndnorthwiltshire.org.uk
helenbox@mndnorthwiltshire.org.uk
and
sallysmith@mndnorthwiltshire.org.uk

Don't forget that you can still find information and advice at the numbers and addresses on the left.

The next **Carers Support Group** will be an informal cuppa & chat on Zoom at 7pm on **19th October**.

Contact Tash at
carersupport@mndnorthwiltshire.org.uk

The poster features the NHS logo at the top right. The main text reads 'BOOST YOUR IMMUNITY' in large, bold, white letters on a dark blue background. Below this, it says 'WITH THE AUTUMN COVID BOOSTER' in smaller white text. A red banner at the bottom left states 'ONLINE BOOKING IS NOW AVAILABLE FOR'. Below the banner, three categories are listed with checkmarks: 'PEOPLE AGED 75 AND OVER', 'IMMUNOSUPPRESSED', and 'HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE WORKERS'. The background is light blue with faint virus icons.

COVID again

The roll-out of the autumn COVID-19 booster in England has now begun. Those who are eligible should be invited for their booster by the NHS. If you do not hear soon, contact your GP's surgery.

Contact the editor

The deadline for submission for the next issue of the newsletter will be **10th January 2023**. Email the editor on info@mndnorthwiltshire.org.uk
To **unsubscribe** from this newsletter email your name and 'unsubscribe' to secretary@mndnorthwiltshire.org.uk