



South East Wales Branch Newsletter

Message from the Chair

Welcome to the first issue of the South East Wales Branch newsletter, which is a round-up of 2023. We had a very busy year, with our supporters and fundraisers going from strength to strength. As Chair of the South East Wales Branch, I would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to everyone who has supported us throughout the last year.

It has been a fantastic year in terms of fundraising and, without all your donations, sponsored events and fundraising activities, we would not have been able to help our MND community as much as we have. We cannot thank you enough.

On behalf of the Branch, I would like to wish everyone in the MND community– those living with MND, their families, friends and carers, volunteers and supporters – **a Happy New Year.**



Jennifer Burgos, Chair
South East Wales Branch



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Going the Extra Mile

One of the highlights of the year was Kevin Sinfield's 7 in 7 in 7 Challenge, inspired by fellow team member and friend Rob Burrow who played No 7. Rugby League legend and MND patron, Kevin Sinfield, donned his running shoes for another epic challenge to raise awareness and funds to support those affected by MND. This challenge saw Kevin and his team run an ultra marathon every day for seven days in seven cities around Great Britain and Ireland.

Each marathon had an extra mile, to signify the extra mile people can go to help their friends in tough times. We were so excited that Kevin's second day of the challenge took place in Cardiff on 2nd December. We would like to thank the volunteers and family members who joined Kevin for the extra mile and fundraised on the day.

We would like to pass on our congratulations to Kevin and Rob on being awarded CBEs in the New Year's Honours List. It is a well deserved honour in recognition of all that you do to fundraise and raise awareness of MND.



At our Branch meeting last July, we were pleased to welcome Cllr Trevor Watkins, Mayor of Newport, and his daughter, Mayoress Catherine Karlson. Cllr Watkins discussed ways in which he could support our Branch, and informed us that the two chosen charities for his year in office would be the Motor Neurone Disease Association South East Wales Branch and Growing Space, a mental health charity.

We were thrilled that the Mayor chose our Branch as one of the charities he is supporting during his year in office. Our Branch members and volunteers have enjoyed supporting his fundraising events already organised, such as the duck race at Cwmbran Boating Lake, a Charity Dinner and auction at Junction 28 and a Charity Christmas Concert at John Frost School. We are looking forward to attending the charity events he has planned over the next few months.

Championing Our Cause

We are also extremely pleased that Howells Solicitors will be supporting the Motor Neurone Disease Association South East Wales Branch and Velindre Cancer Care Fundraising during 2024.

As part of their year long support, Howells Solicitors are excited to announce they will be engaged in various fundraising events and campaigns. A spokesperson for Howells said, "We are motivated not only by the incredible work of our two chosen charities, but also by the personal stories within our team of staff and families affected by Cancer and MND."



Howells have already held a Christmas jumper day and a few staff took part in Kevin Sinfield's 7 in 7 in 7 Challenge. They also have staff running in the Swansea Half in June and the Cardiff Half in October.

Thank you once again to the Mayor of Newport and to Howells Solicitors.

Fundraising

As a Branch we continue to try and deliver our core tasks for the people of South East Wales living with MND. We have raised significant funds over the last year, mostly due to the fantastic generosity of the people of South East Wales.

Another highlight for us was organising the 'Music for MND', an evening of music, in partnership with Crickhowell Choral Society and Dough & Daughters. Many thanks to everyone who attended the event at St Edmund's Church, Crickhowell.



We were treated to a medley of music from Crickhowell Choral Society, the children's choir, a string quartet and Men in Sheds. What a wonderful way to raise awareness of MND and fundraise for our Branch at the same time!

We would like to thank all those who completed events and fundraised over £51,000 for the South East Wales Branch during 2023:

- Abertillery and Blaina Rotary, auction event
- Michael O'Hara, Chepstow fundraiser
- The Ladies' Committee of Aberaman Legion in Aberdare, fundraising evening
- Sharon Harford, MNDA 15000 steps and sale of books
- Risca Rugby Club, Charity Rugby Match
- Phoenix Group, annual donation
- Easyfundraising
- Janice Chappell and brother in law Paul, cycling Ayr to Caldicot
- Robert Baker, donation from sales of Bobby's Coffee
- Machen Show, table top sale
- The Exiles Netball Club, Torfaen, fundraising event
- Music for MND
- Gareth Blackwell, Cardiff Half Marathon
- Michael Croft and team from Caldicot Town Football Club, 'SnowCadriPen Hike and Bike Challenge'
- Christchurch Parish, Summer Concert
- Anna and Susan Jones, Cardiff Half Marathon and an auction event
- The Crown at Pantygelli, quiz evening
- Cwmbran Brass Band, fundraising event
- Tannwen Saunders, Margaret Lock, Chris Strong, Kath Howells, Roger Williams, general fundraising/donations
- Legacy and in memoriam donations



Charity Auction

Abertillery and Blaena Rotary   motor neurone disease association

In aid of MND Association South East Wales and Abertillery and Blaena Rotary at Abertillery and Blaenau Gwent Rugby Club Friday, 25th November 7.00pm for 7.30 pm



Photos from some of our fundraisers in 2023



Supporting our Community



We are so grateful to everyone who has donated to us during 2023 and our secretary, Margaret, has had a busy time sending thank you letters!

Your donations during 2023 have enabled us to provide over £29,000 in supporting grants. These grants have been used towards the purchase of:

- a bed
- a bio bidet
- a Carers' Grant
- 16 Cost of Living Grants
- 2 driving assessments
- a garden adaption
- garden equipment
- 11 holiday grants
- house adaptations
- Hydrotherapy
- a lift
- 2 mobile arms
- an over bed table
- a Quality of Life Grant
- 3 Rising Chairs
- 6 Stairlifts
- a taxi to the hospital
- a contribution to Swansea Bay health care meeting
- a wetroom
- a Young People's Grant
- a donation to the MNDA's CEO's Appeal 2023*



* The MNDA CEO's Appeal 2023 is used for support grants, children's counselling, healthcare projects, biomedical projects, cost of living campaigns, funding tablet devices with communication software, contributing towards an MND Community Specialist and helping to fund expert research.

Forthcoming events

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| • MNDA 15000 steps a day in January | 1st to 31st January |
| • Presentation of MND Charter to Caerphilly CBC | 16th February |
| • Mayor's Charity Pub Quiz at The Dodger, Newport | 22nd February |
| • Cymru lunch at Morels Restaurant, Cross Keys College | 1st March |
| • Mayor's Charity Musical Event, St Patrick's Church | 6th April |
| • Italian lunch at Morels Restaurant, Cross Keys College | 19th April |
| • Musical event with Risca Male Voice Choir | 18th May |
| • Swansea Half Marathon 2024 | 9th June |
| • Cardiff Half Marathon 2024 | 6th October |

We hope that you have enjoyed our first newsletter. Any feedback or comments would be appreciated.

The next edition is due to be published in April. If you have any stories, articles or fundraising activities you would like to see in the next edition, please submit them via email to mndsew@outlook.com