

# Hertfordshire Branch Annual Report 2025

2025 was a year of change for the Branch as Kent Allen stepped down from his role as Chair. We are extremely grateful for the leadership Kent has provided over the past five years, guiding us through the move to online meetings during Covid and supporting the merger with the former South Herts Branch.

While we searched for a new Chair, the Branch continued to flourish thanks to the hard work and goodwill of the Committee. In May, Lindsey Lucas (previously Branch Secretary) took on the role of Chair, and following a successful recruitment campaign, we warmly welcomed Stuart Barrett as our new Secretary and Vice Chair in November.

## Care and Support Activities

With the support of our Committee and Volunteers, we continued to hold regular monthly meetings at The Three Horseshoes in Hooks Cross and at the Box Moor Trust near Hemel Hempstead. These get-togethers offer people affected by MND the chance to share experiences, find support, and build friendships.

We extend our thanks to the staff at The Three Horseshoes for their warm hospitality, and to Lesley and Jenny for kindly hosting the Boxmoor meetings. Hertfordshire is a large county, and we are always looking for additional venues to help us reach more people. If you know of a suitable location with good disabled access and parking, we would love to hear from you.

Our team of Association Visitors (AVs) continue to provide invaluable one-to-one support to families across the county. We are currently looking to recruit new AVs, particularly for the southern area of Hertfordshire.

## Branch Finances

We are very grateful to the many individuals and organisations who have supported us through donations and fundraising events. Our total income for the year ending 31 December 2025 was £42,195.77.

Thanks to the positive balance carried forward from 2024, we were able to spend £46,135.60 directly on care for our members. This includes MND Association Grants and AV expenses. These grants help fund essential equipment and services that are not provided by statutory services — common requests include riser-recliner chairs, stairlifts, and bathroom adaptations.

Administrative costs (meetings, newsletters, postage and IT services) totalled £3,036.81.

Given the rising cost of equipment and the increased demand for grants, the Branch made the difficult but prudent decision to cap the amount we contribute to each grant. The remainder is kindly covered by the MND Association's National Office, ensuring that our members still receive full funding for the support they need.

## Branch Events

We were delighted to enjoy much kinder weather for this year's Annual Walk at Stanborough Lakes. Thirty-one supporters joined us for a gentle stroll or roll around the North Lake, including familiar faces, new friends, and several enthusiastic four-legged companions. With raffle proceeds and entry donations, the event raised over **£500** for the Branch, and our banners helped increase awareness among park visitors.

Our Christmas Lunch, held at The Three Horseshoes in early December, was attended by 32 members and friends. As always, Alan kindly stepped into the role of Santa — complete with his real beard and a sack full of chocolate treats!

## Volunteers and Training

We are incredibly fortunate to have the support of many dedicated volunteers who give their time throughout the year. As Branch Chair, I want to acknowledge the vital contribution of our Committee members and our team of AVs.

We are also fortunate to have support from Luke and Kerrie managing our social media accounts and Sarah who provides first aid support at our Annual Walk.

We are grateful for the support we receive from Chloe our Community Support Co-ordinator and Roger our Relationship Fundraiser from National Office.

Over the past year, Committee members and AVs have taken part in several online training sessions covering topics such as safeguarding and GDPR. We also managed to attend a few in-person meetings, which are always valuable opportunities to connect and share learning.

Finally, we extend our sincere thanks to everyone who has contributed in any way to the Branch's work this year. Your support enables us to continue helping local people affected by MND, while also contributing to the Association's wider care, research, and campaigning efforts.

### **Lindsey Lucas**

Chair, Hertfordshire Branch