Activities for you

SDN members discovered the plant life of Bridgnorth Cemetery with ecologist John Handley and George Sharp from Caring for God's Acre in September. If this type of activity interests you, contact George to find out more: tel 01588 673 041 or email george@cfga.org.uk. She can discuss access needs.

Ellie Forrester spoke passionately about making nature accessible to all at SDN’s AGM in September. Ellie invites fellow SDN members to take part in an Accessible Churchyards Workshop at St Giles Church and Churchyard and/or Church Hall in Shrewsbury from 10am to 3pm on Monday 25th November 2019. Please book in advance with SDN to attend.

SDN’s next Members’ Meeting is at the Whitehouse Hotel, Watling Street, Wellington, TF1 2NJ, from 10.30am to 1pm on Thursday 12th December.

All welcome! The speakers will be new SDN Chair and blind radio journalist Paul Bryce and Nikki Barden of the Shropshire Dystonia Group. Light refreshments will be on offer too.
Dear Members,

Those of you who came along to our Annual General Meeting in September will recognise these words: “Change is important for any organisation. One that does not change dies. Growth and development are essential.”

I am happy to inform you that we have a new person to take over as Chair of SDN – by the time you read this newsletter Paul Bryce will be in post. Paul will step aside as Patron, leaving Jess Hiles capably fulfilling this role. We still seek a Secretary and Treasurer but have welcomed Gillian Miller as Deputy Secretary. I know that you will support both Paul and Gillian.

I believe exciting times are ahead of us. We have recently been afforded great opportunities for our charity and I share some of them with you here.

We were invited to Oswestry CultureFest in mid-August. Our stand was busy, as we made useful contacts, signed up new members and gave out a quantity of “I need help” Safe Place cards. In late August we had a very successful Awareness Day at Princess Royal Hospital, raising over £180 while sharing information. Early September saw us at Telford Diversity and Unity Day. It was a pleasure to mingle with the people in the Market Square in Wellington, talking and distributing information to many of the visitors.

HIDE (Hidden Illnesses and Disabilities Exhibition) in Telford in mid-September was another positive experience. It was good to meet several of our members there and to make new connections too. We were at the TECHSevern event in Shrewsbury in late September. This was so useful, as technology is moving forward and important to all our futures. We signed up new members and also fielded a number of signposting enquiries. Thank you to all our volunteers for their help at all these events.

As I sign off as Chair of SDN, both I and Ann (outgoing Secretary) are enthusiastic about progressing with our roles as Chair and Secretary of Safe Places Shropshire. I will also continue to do the signposting work for SDN. You will still see us! I look forward to this charity growing, so I leave you with these words: “Every contact is an opportunity.” It may mean a new member or volunteer, ensuring that SDN is “Helping to give disabled people and carers a voice” and is “The place for disability information” locally.

Best wishes, 

Ruby (outgoing Chair)
Keeping safe

The first joint conference of Shropshire’s Adults’ and Children’s Safeguarding Boards happened last year. Shropshire Disability Network (SDN) then started sharing related articles. Here is the next one in the series…

Police urge vigilance over county lines drug dealing

West Mercia Police have asked the public to be on the lookout for signs of county lines drug dealing and to report anything they see to the police.

County lines is a term used to describe gangs transporting drugs from big cities into towns. This is a national problem involving drug gangs operating from cities including Birmingham, Liverpool, Manchester and London.

Police are urging people to look out for the following signs:

• Children or young people going missing from home or school.
• Changes in a person’s behaviour or emotional wellbeing.
• Children or young people socialising with unfamiliar people.
• A person starting to abuse drugs and alcohol.
• Someone acquiring money they can’t account for.
• Someone buying expensive goods they can’t afford.
• Lone children visiting from outside the area.
• Someone with multiple phones, tablets or SIM cards.
• Unknown or suspicious people going into a neighbour’s house – especially if that neighbour is vulnerable.

A senior officer from neighbouring Warwickshire Police said: “County lines criminals tend to target youngsters and vulnerable people, getting them to deal drugs. This is why we are asking people to look out for the signs. On their own each of these signs may not be suspicious, but put them together with changes in behaviour and it could be a sign of county lines drug dealing.”

If you have any information that could help the police to tackle county lines drug crime, please call 101 (call 999 if a crime is in progress). You can also provide information anonymously to the independent charity Crimestoppers: call 0800 555 111 or visit www.crimestoppers-uk.org.

If you have any concerns regarding this article, please contact SDN: call or text 07780 852 229, or email admin@shropshire-disability.net.
Headway Shropshire are celebrating their 30th Anniversary this year. The charity was established in 1989 by three Shrewsbury women to support people who have suffered a head injury.

Who would have thought that, after their first meeting in the occupational therapy department at Royal Shrewsbury Hospital, 30 years later the charity would have grown to offer the services they have now.

The centre on Oxon Business Park was opened in 2002, as a day opportunities service, with an aim to enable survivors of a brain injury to reach their full potential by relearning skills they may have lost or learning new skills in their activities programme.

Headway Shropshire now provide support and rehabilitation to 70 adults throughout Shropshire and the surrounding areas.

They also provide support and advice to their families and carers.

In the re-ablement centre, which is open five days a week, survivors can cook in the adapted kitchen, get creative in the woodwork and art room and improve cognitive skills in the computer suite.

Our community support team offers specialist care and support 24 hours a day throughout the county. They support people with personal care needs, accompanying them on shopping trips, social activities and appointments, and assisting survivors with everyday household tasks.
Headway Shropshire’s care and purpose-designed activities assist in rehabilitation, respite and support. They aim to give people back the life skills they may have lost and enable them to live independently within their communities again.

**Brain injury can lead to…**

- Loss of memory
- Communication difficulties
- Anger and irritability
- Headaches
- Difficulties with planning
- Noise intolerance
- Depression
- Changed Personality
- Mood swing

**Acquired Brain Injury (ABI) is often referred to as the hidden disability, effects cannot always physically be seen and therefore brain injury survivors can suffer from a general lack of understanding or lack of knowledge.**

Many leave hospital care without a diagnosis and it is left untreated for months if not years.

Approximately half of deaths in the under 40s are due to head injury. Head injuries can be sustained from illness, strokes, surgery, tumours, or trauma and so on.

Survivors with a brain injury come from all backgrounds, races, ages and religions and any one of us could become affected at any time.

The outreach service is free to access to help make initial contact with those who have suffered a brain injury and their families. The service can provide information and support.

Find out more… 01743 365 565
info@headwayshropshire.org.uk
www.headwayshropshire.org.uk
The Shropshire ME Group

This Support Group, run by volunteers mostly with ME/CFS (Myalgic Encephalomyelitis/Chronic Fatigue Syndrome), has been around for over 30 years. During this time, it has supported many people in Shropshire and beyond with this disabling, chronic condition which has been misrepresented by the media, suffered from being tarred with the label of “hysteria” (albeit by a more modern name) and has little support from the public.

So what IS ME? It may often start with a virus or other immune system overload, and can manifest itself in many symptoms including overwhelming exhaustion, muscle pain, sensory disturbance and brain fog. What it is not is a deconditioning psychiatric illness, and exercise can have the effect of exacerbating it. It can vary between being able to work with time off and no social life and being bedridden and tube-fed. With young people there is a good chance of recovery, but many people plateau and have to balance their lifestyle and diet to remain able to do even small things. Some remain bedbound for many years.

Our group aims to provide information and support via our website, library, regular newsletters, conference and telephone help. In the past five years we have developed Support Group meetings around Shropshire and in Montgomery for both those diagnosed with ME, Carers, and one for Young People. These are led by Donna Teague, who, as well as having experience of looking after a family member with ME, has other relevant qualifications, and attends the annual Invest in ME Research conference in London. With arguably minimal NHS support, apart from a six-week course that many cannot attend because of poor health or distance and poor transport links, this is a lifeline for some. It is also a time to meet others and realise you are not alone with the often worrying array of symptoms.
As with most charities, we are always looking for new committee members. I will be stepping down as Secretary at our next AGM as I have other roles within the group and am ageing fast. We are also looking for a Trustee to supplement our existing trustees and bring in new skills and ideas.

As our finances have increased during the past five years with the onset of the Support Groups, we are, as are all charities, needing more income than we have in the past. Though this is not astronomical, our members are not well enough to participate in fundraising efforts and have often become socially isolated, so that we do not have the fit folk to Climb Every Mountain! Any businesses or individuals who would like to help us would be more than welcome!

In the past three years we have been out in Shrewsbury and in Birmingham for the ME Action Awareness Campaign in May. This condition has been at best ignored and at worst suffered from contested research and treatment. This has brought three debates in Parliament, NICE (National Institute for Health and Care Excellence) are rewriting their guidelines, which some sufferers have found damaging, and public perception is changing. Money is now going into biomedical research in the USA, though this is still very minor in the UK. There is now convincing evidence pointing towards the causes of ME, and hope for future treatments.

If you know someone with ME, believe them! This is yet another Invisible Illness that needs your support. Even if you are unable to help in other ways, understanding the condition and supporting those you may know who are diagnosed with it is a huge step in the right direction.

For more information about our group, please visit our website, https://shropshiremegroup.org/, or phone Donna on 07413 529 994.

Maralyn Hepworth, Secretary, Shropshire ME Group
There are 94 branches of NASS around the UK. These mainly provide hydrotherapy exercise to treat Ankylosing Spondylitis (AS), which is a disease of the spine.

We set up NASS Shropshire & Welsh Marches Branch in February 2012, at the Robert Jones and Agnes Hunt Orthopaedic Hospital.

In the hydro pool, our physiotherapist puts us through a specific set of exercises for Ankylosing Spondylitis, which is greatly helped by being in warm water. We get 9-15 people at the pool each Thursday evening from 7pm to 8pm, which is a good number for the pool size.

Each pool session costs around £60, for the hydro pool hire and the payments to our physiotherapists and lifeguard. So we have to charge members a monthly fee.

What happens?
Joints in the spine fuse, meaning the back cannot bend and the neck cannot turn.
It’s a painful, progressive form of inflammatory arthritis. It mainly affects the spine but can also affect other joints, tendons and ligaments. Other areas such as the eyes and bowel can also sometimes be involved.

1. Inflammation occurs at the site where ligaments or tendons attach to the bone. This is known as enthesis.
2. The inflammation is followed by some wearing away of the bone at the site of the attachment. This is known as enthesopathy.
3. As the inflammation reduces, healing takes place and new bone develops. Movement becomes restricted when bone replaces the elastic tissue of ligaments or tendons.
4. Repetition of this inflammatory process leads to further bone formation and the individual bones which make up your backbone (vertebrae) can fuse together.

1 in every 200 of the adult population in the UK has axial SpA (AS). That’s twice as many as Multiple Sclerosis and Parkinson’s Disease.

Other reasons to join NASS after diagnosis of AS

- Full access to our community forum.
- Unrestricted access to the Members’ Area online resources.
- Invitations to our annual Members’ Day for you and a friend.
- An exclusive guide to claiming PIP and ESA benefits.
- Exclusive AS News magazine twice a year.
- The NASS membership pack.
- The chance to transform the future of AS by contributing to cutting edge AS research and campaigns.
- Have a real impact on the work we do: participate in NASS surveys and vote at our AGM.

Phil Godden, Hon. Treasurer, NASS Shropshire & Welsh Marches Branch

Have your say on access to general practice

How easy is it to get an appointment to see your GP or practice nurse? Have you tried seeking help from others, for example, your pharmacist? Healthwatch Shropshire would like to know about your experiences.
Telephone: 01743 237 884 (8.45am-5pm, Monday-Thursday)
Email: enquiries@healthwatchshropshire.co.uk
Post: Healthwatch Shropshire, 4 The Creative Quarter, Shrewsbury Business Park, Shrewsbury, Shropshire, SY2 6LG
Harvest puzzle – fit the words into the grid

COS    APPLE    CEREAL    AVOCADO    VEGETABLES
GAS    BACON    FRENCH    CABBAGE    WATERMELON
JAM    BEANS    GINGER    CARROTS    WHEATSHEAF
MAY    BREAD    GRAPES    DAMSONS
NUT    CREAM    ONIONS    HARVEST    LETTUCE    CAULIFLOWER
      DATES    SPRING    ORANGES    RASPBERRIES
      FRUIT    
BEAN    GALIA    CUCUMBER    SPROUTS    RHUBARB
EGGS    JELLY    FESTIVAL    VIOLETS    BLACKBERRIES
IRIS    KIWIS    TOAST    
KELP    LEEKS    POTATOES    
MILK    PASTA    RADISHES    
PLUM    PECANS    SAUSAGES    AUBERGINE
SILK    SUGAR    TOMATOES    MARMALADE
SOUP    SWEDISH    
YAMS    TREES    PINEAPPLE
SDN Member Ellie Forrester has donated this photo of a Bluetit perched on a twig in the snow to adorn one of SDN’s Christmas cards this year. SDN’s cards, and those of several of our member organisations, including Headway Shropshire and Shropshire ME Group, are on sale at the Charity Christmas Card Shop in St Mary’s Church, Shrewsbury, from 25th October till 7th December. The shop opens 10.15am to 4pm, Monday to Saturday.

Commemoration

Shropshire Disability Network (SDN) held a minute’s silence at its AGM in September to commemorate the life of John Speake. John passed away peacefully at home on 16th August aged 86 years. John regularly took part in SDN’s Members’ Meetings and gave up his time to support SDN’s fundraising. He will be greatly missed. John was known for volunteering with The Royal British Legion as part of the Poppy Appeal in his retirement.
Fundraising thanks

Shropshire Disability Network is a volunteer-run charity. Donations help us to provide our informational website and newsletter, represent the interests of and reach out to people with disabilities and carers at stakeholder events, maintain points of telephone, text and email contact for people seeking information and support, and hold our quarterly Members’ Meetings.

Warm thanks to Waitrose and fountain pen shop Write Here in Shrewsbury town centre for recent donations. Thanks to their lovely customers too. Waitrose included SDN in its Community Matters scheme and Write Here hosts one of SDN’s collecting tins.

At Shropshire Disability Network we appreciate our supporters who advertise on our website

Lewis Wealth Management Limited has recently renewed its advert online. The company can be contacted by telephoning 01743 444 700 or through its website, www.lewiswealthmanagement.co.uk.

To submit items to Your Voice, email newsletter@shropshire-disability.net or write to SDN, C/o 26 Aldwick Drive, Radbrook Green, Shrewsbury, SY3 6BN. Telephone or text SDN on 07780 852 229.

Facebook /ShropshireDisabilityNetwork and /SafePlacesShropshire
Twitter @ShropDisNetwork and @SafePlaceShrops
Website https://shropshiredisability.net/

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