

2021 report for AGM from Secretary and Newsletter editor

Before 2020, with my partner Elizabeth, I had attended some Group events including a Christmas dinner, quizzes and so on, had given a talk to the Dorchester Group at the Cricket Club venue and had regularly taken Elizabeth to the hydro sessions. When I read in Elizabeth's newsletter that the group was on the verge of collapse because the 'six year' rule meant most of the existing committee had to retire, I offered to help to ensure that the Group continued to provide services to the local Parkinson's population. I expected only to serve as a committee member and gradually provide help as I understood more about Parkinson's and the Group. After telephoning Baz, the then Chairman, I was invited to attend a committee meeting on Monday January 13th 2020.

It was something of a shock to discover that very quickly I was asked to become Secretary and shortly after that Newsletter Editor as well! To fulfil these roles, I undertook a course of training, initiated on-line by Head Office.

It has been a turbulent year for us all. Shortly after I joined the Group, Coronavirus put a block on meeting people face to face so putting a stop to most of the Group's activities and isolating many in their own homes. We were quickly able to establish virtual committee meetings using Zoom, the first being held in March 2020, but as only some 50% of group members have access to computers, the main Group meetings, including the 2020 AGM had to be cancelled or postponed indefinitely.

During the year, as your Secretary I have attended committee meetings and produced the minutes for those meetings. I have also become one of three signatories for our banking arrangements which have grown considerably more complex this year due to the new Head Office cash pooling arrangements. I have also attended several on-line webinars and other sessions using Zoom that have been organised by Head Office for the whole of the UK and by our 'Staff Contact' for the south of England area. These sessions have kept me updated on what other volunteers are doing, what research is taking place and so on and have provided some fodder for the newsletters. Also, it is worth mentioning that I administered our involvement with the Rotary Raffle which concluded with a donation of £264 to our funds.

As Newsletter Editor, with guidance from Dave Clegg, our Acting Chairman, I have produced and distributed seven newsletters, in several of which we have pleaded for members to come forward and offer their services to the Group by joining the committee. This pleading has unfortunately met with zero success. Due to the quite high cost of producing and distributing the newsletter and as Coronavirus has reduced the amount of news to promulgate, in October 2020 we decided to send newsletters out bi-monthly until the situation changes and it becomes worthwhile re-instating a monthly edition.

Jim Bayliss
Secretary