

## **Chairman's Annual Report for 2010**

This is our eleventh AGM and has been a busy year. The annual report this year will be made in a slightly different way, for three committee members will describe some of the major projects that we have been taken part in during the year. Before beginning I need to remind you that the political landscape has recently changed and our activities must now be viewed in the context of the structural changes proposed in the recent NHS White Paper.

By 2013 strategic health authorities and primary care trusts will have disappeared and it is intended that commissioning NHS services will be taken over by consortia of GP practices, an unknown entity. There probably will be three GP consortia covering Berkshire West; one each for Wokingham, Reading and West Berkshire. At present most GPs are fully committed to 'hands-on' medicine, so few will see themselves as 'coalition commissioners'. GP consortia will need considerable administrative support and setting up these seems bound to be both time consuming and expensive. A new NHS National Commissioning Board will commission services that GPs do not, such as dental, ophthalmic and pharmacy. This board may also commission more specialised and regional services; however, what form this will take is still not known. We are concerned about the future of the National Service Framework for Long-Term Neurological Conditions. This NSF, launched in 2005 though not to be fully implemented until 2015, gave great hope to the neurological community. The 11 Quality Requirements (covering services from first diagnosis of a neurological condition until end of life) offered improved services for neurological patients and it will be an absolute travesty if this NSF is now unceremoniously dropped. We need to do all we can to rescue the NSF and campaign for its full implementation.

In October 2009 we held the first of our Patient Consultation Events here at Padworth to gather patient perspective on experiences being diagnosed with a neurological condition, finding information, help and support and their suggestions for improved services. There were 14 participants, each representing a different condition, and their experiences were very revealing. A report on this meeting was prepared and presented to the NSF Local Implementation Team. We were unable to complete the agenda at this first consultation event and the information was so valuable that we decided to follow it with a series of Focus Groups to cover a series of issues. Our second Patient Consultation event on experiences of neurological patients staying in hospital will be briefly reviewed by Fred Davison. A third patient consultation event is planned for October 2010 covering access to therapy.

We have also collaborated with the Berkshire West Local Involvement Network (LINK) and our member organisations on a major survey of patient and carer views on the quality of neurological services provided in Berkshire West. John Holt will be reviewing this shortly.

The committee has continued to represent your views and take an active part on advisory bodies and attended PCT meetings. We continue to value our relationship with local professionals and are pleased that they continue to consult with us on a regular basis. We are represented on the NSF Local Implementation Team. WBNA continues to engage with representatives of patients in other regions working with Neurological Alliances in Buckinghamshire, Hampshire, Oxfordshire and the recently-formed Swindon NA. We have also played a part at national level with Fred Davison serving as the Regional Neurological Alliance Trustee.

Progress continues to be made with the project for a Hydrotherapy Pool and Power-Assisted Gym for Newbury/Thatcham and Irene Waters, one of the directors, will be providing a brief report. WBNA is also founding partner in the West Berkshire Independent Living Network which will provide advice and support for people with disabilities and a drop in centre at the newly-refurbished Broadway House in Newbury.

Membership consists of 24 charities and 14 individuals covering 29 different conditions. Our finances remain in good health and we have a strong Executive Committee, eager to continue our work. I would like particularly to thank Joyce Parker, Molly Davison and Carol Powell for their time and contributions to the Executive Committee this last year. Finally, it remains to thank our President and Patrons for their support during 2010 and our remaining committee members for all their hard work. I would also like to announce that this year we are conferring Life Membership on three people who have provided us great support and service over the years. These are Lady Anne Hallifax, Joyce Parker and Molly Davison

David Roberts (Chairman)

9th September 2010