

*Newbury Community Hospital.*

Plans for the new Newbury Community hospital are steadily moving forward. At a recent meeting with the hospital planners it was explained that the architect is currently producing a set of first drawings. The brief is to design a flexible layout so that further facilities can easily be added in at later stages. The new hospital must incur no more in running costs than the present service.

However, some money will be transferred from the Royal Berks. and Battle Hospital Trust for the extra outpatients and surgical activity transferring to Newbury from there. The offer of fund-raising for extra facilities such as a hydrotherapy pool is gratefully received, but unless someone can guarantee the running costs they will not accommodate such requests. We need to submit our ideas and requests promptly, and of course be in a position to respond when we are asked to comment on plans. The new hospital Project Manager is Sue Howson. Sue Ballard, Chief Executive of the new Council for Voluntary Service, and Cynthia Newman, Lay member on the Primary Care Group are the main contacts for the voluntary sector. The network for consultation is hopefully now finally in place.

*Service redesign.*

Sue Howson is also tasked with the separate job of 'Service redesign'. Later this year she plans to review services for people with neurological conditions. The Alliance expects to play a significant role in this. Anyone who is interested, please contact one of the Executive Committee, or better still, come to any of our open meetings.

*Extra NHS money for Berkshire!*

The Chancellor's budget announcement included £30 million extra to Berkshire Health Authority. Chief Executive Nick Relph said he would have a clear idea what he would do with it by May. We've written to him to give him some ideas, and will let you know his response in the next Newsletter. Why not write to him too?

*Combined therapies project.*

Did you see the photograph and article in the Newbury Weekly News recently? Their headline read 'Campaign launched for neurological facilities unit' and the photo showed our Chairman, David Roberts, Website Manager Alex King, Secretary, John Holt, and Sandleford physiotherapist, Kent Macmillan amongst the physiotherapy equipment at Sandleford. Having negotiated that space and equipment is available at Sandleford, it is more than slightly disappointing to report that our application for a grant from Berkshire Health Authority to fund a team of staff to provide a combination of physio, speech and occupational therapies has been turned down, 'In the light of other priorities', as they informed us. Undeterred we will be seeking a meeting to see how we can get these priorities turned round! Jane Tandy, the Hospital Manager was quoted as saying 'If the Neurological Alliance can raise the money that would be a good use of our facilities', adding that there would be space for the service to transfer to the new hospital if funding was available. So there's plenty to play for here and we're going for it!

*Hydrotherapy provision.*

In addition to making it known that we expect the new Newbury Hospital to be equipped with, amongst other things, a hydrotherapy pool, we have been looking at other pools with a view to identifying a network across the District. We are still hoping that pools in Mortimer and Hungerford can be made more accessible, and believe both owners may be able to get this actioned. We mentioned last time the pool in Lambourn which we can recommend as suitable for those who can take therapy without a therapist, and the pool at Highclere is well known to many. We've one other pool we know about with a potential for hydrotherapy which we're going to check over, but if anyone knows of any other pools which might be worth looking at, or needs information on the ones above, please phone John Holt on the number overleaf.

### *Day Care Centre, Theale.*

We have been asked to take part in consultation about the development of day service facilities for adults with disabilities to cover the east of West Berkshire. The fuller the consultation the better. If you wish to be there, please contact John Holt on the number below.

### *West Berkshire Community Health Council.*

The Alliance passed details of every neurological voluntary group in the area to the Community Council for Berkshire who are organising the election, of voluntary sector members to the Community Health Council. In view of the low priority generally given to services for people with neurological conditions we might, at least, vote for candidates we believe to be aware of the needs and plights of our members.

### *National Neurological Alliance.*

There are currently only 5 other regional neurological Alliances like ours, and we're going to meet together in the summer to share and learn.

As the smallest regional Alliance in terms of geography, the knowledge and experiences our big cousins should prove very helpful.

### *Charitable status.*

The Charity Commissioners asked us to change our Constitution, which we've done with speed, and all due democracy, so as to obtain charitable status as quickly as the process allows. Once achieved, raising funds should prove much easier!

### *Membership going up!*

Carol Sambrook has joined our team and taken on the role of Membership Secretary. Her research confirmed the need for an honorary membership level for some smaller, hard pressed groups. To date, groups representing 15 neurological conditions have attended our meetings and more than half this number have already signed up as members. To those of you where it still applies, please ask your Committees to agree to join the Alliance, which will surely strengthen us all.

### *Raising awareness.*

Many thanks to Hilary Hinchliffe for keeping the press up to date with our activities. This has

brought some potential volunteers into view. It has been mooted that we should hold the occasional publicity event. Any offers of help, please contact Hilary on 01635 42775.

### *Honoured Patron.*

Just after our last Newsletter went out we heard the great news that one of our Patrons, Susan Greenfield, was awarded the CBE in the New Year honours. Warmest congratulations go to her.

### *The Executive Committee.*

The Executive Committee is now 5 strong, following the appointment of accountant, Patrick McGrath, as our Treasurer. Many thanks to Gillian Hall for holding the Treasurer's role until we found a more willing volunteer. As we approach the AGM, nominations to fill other Executive Committee positions would be most welcome. The Executive Committee currently comprises; David Roberts, Chairman; Joyce Parker, Vice Chairman; Patrick McGrath, Treasurer; John Holt, Secretary; and Gillian Hall.

### *Money matters.*

We're delighted to announce that West Berkshire Council has awarded us a grant of £500 to help with our running costs. Many thanks to them! The search for other funds continues to occupy our minds and time. Many thanks to Hilary Hinchliffe for her tireless work on this.

### *Diary Dates.*

**Thurs. 18th May** at 1400 hrs. **Open meeting** at 11, Croft Lane, Newbury. Our guest is Dr Christine Collin, Consultant in Neurological Rehabilitation at Royal Berks. and Battle hospital.

**Thurs. 13th July** at 1400 hrs. **Open meeting** at 11, Croft Lane, Newbury.

**Wed. 27th September** at 1930 hrs. **AGM** at the Mencap Centre, Enborne Road, Newbury.

Published by:

*West Berkshire Neurological Alliance,*  
2, Clayhill Crescent, Newbury, Berks. RG14 2NP  
Tel 01635 33582