

Neuro nurse revving up

We are delighted to report that Carol Allen the new specialist nurse for rare and complex neurological conditions started work on 31st October. Carol is attached to Professor Christine Collin's Neuro-Rehab Unit and will be supporting people in West Berkshire who are affected by Motor Neurone Disease, Huntington's Disease, Myasthenia Gravis, Late Effects of Polio, Multiple System Atrophy, Ataxia and PSP. We have almost, but not quite, reached the grand total of £90k needed for funding the post and researching its impact. Offers of help to complete the funding package will be most appreciated.

Dr Monnica Stewart

We are indebted to the late Dr Monnica Stewart for a very generous bequest to the Alliance. Monnica provided tremendous support and made unique contributions to many aspects of our work during her lifetime. She is sorely missed and we plan to make very good use of her legacy.

Projects update

The Alliance has been a member of the Active Therapies Partnership which plans to introduce a programme of different therapeutic activities for the brain. Following a thorough review of the best way to manage this project we have agreed to restructure the existing partnership arrangements to bring the project directly under the wing of the Alliance. Raising funds will be our immediate priority. *Singing for the Brain*, the pilot programme pioneered by the West Berkshire Alzheimer's Society, has proved highly valuable and

continues as a popular and successful activity.

Neurosciences: building the regional network

The National Service Framework (NSF) for Long Term Conditions recommends that each Health Area establishes a Neuroscience Network to oversee the necessary changes to deliver the services needed by neurology patients. An inaugural meeting was held of the Thames Valley Network on 30th November, too close to our publishing date for a report. We shall keep you posted on developments

West of Berkshire: it's all in the air

The three PCTs in the West of Berkshire seem likely to merge into one PCT in 2006. The Royal Berks Hospital is forging ahead in the quest for Foundation Trust status. The Review of Neuro-Rehab Services for the West of Berkshire continues. A workshop held on 12th September closely linked the development of these services with proposals in the Long-Term Conditions NSF. The government's Green Paper on the future of social care provision is also receiving much attention from our professional colleagues. A well-attended event on 3rd November highlighted similar themes of integration and accessibility of services. These changes present an opportunity for us to influence neurological provision in our area. We must try to ensure there is no loss of the conjoint working between the PCT and Community Care Directorate. We must work to maintain hospital rehab provision or find better alternatives. Proposals for Foundation Trust Status for the RBH will be explained by Nigel Davies at our January Open Meeting

(details are given at the end of this newsletter).

We urge everyone to use their influence and become a member of the new Trust. There is much change in the air and there has never been a better time for us to express our views on the needs of those we represent.

Infrastructure support

This newsletter is the first to be produced with the help of Shelly Hambrecht. Shelly is supported by 'Change Up' funds from central government and based with Community Action West Berkshire. Change Up funds are available to help support the second tier of the voluntary sector, of which we are part, and we are grateful that our bid was successful. Shelly will be helping us not just with administration but also to develop as an organisation. We are delighted to have her support and look forward to working together. We are indebted to John Holt who has prepared, reproduced and circulated this newsletter in the past.

Open meeting November

We are grateful to Chreanne Montgomery-Smith for a very stimulating talk: 'The Way Forward: Activities for the Brain'. She described the therapeutic value of *Singing for the Brain* and how it is being used by the West Berks Alzheimer's Society. She also reviewed its potential for helping provide improvements for a range of neurological conditions.

Pledge auction

The Rotary Club will be holding another Pledge Auction on 1st April 2006 at Newbury Racecourse and we have been invited to

participate. So far we have two pledges of (1) a flying lesson for two people in a hot air balloon and (2) fifty bags of horse manure. We would be grateful to hear from anyone else with a pledge to make or a bid to offer!

AGM 2005

Dr Peter James, Associate Director of Clinical Engagement in Thames Valley SHA and a GP, gave a talk about the Long-Term Conditions NSF and his new role as the Neuroscience Champion developing improved services for neurology patients in Berkshire.

Changes to the committee included the election of Chreanne Montgomery-Smith and Fred and Molly Davison agreed to become joint secretary. They can be contacted on 01635 202605 or email WBNAsec@aol.com.

Diary dates to note:

12th January. **Open meeting.**
1.45 for 2.00 p.m. at St Joseph's Hall
Nigel Davies on will give a talk on:
Foundation Trust Status at the RBH.

Further dates for Open meetings.
Further dates for Open meetings in 2006 are:
9th March, 11th May, 13th July, 14th September
(AGM) and 9th November. All at 1.45 for
2.00 p.m. at St Joseph's Hall except the AGM.

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We are most grateful to **Newbury Building Society** for their sponsorship of this Newsletter