

David Roberts, Former WBNA Chairman

We are very sad to report that David Roberts, our Chairman for over ten years, passed away on 26th September in hospital near his home in the Midlands. His guiding wisdom and personal insight into living with two neurological conditions was vital to the way the organisation developed. He is much missed by those who knew him.

AGM report

Guest speaker at our AGM was Dr Richard Perry, GP, who leads on neurology commissioning for NHS Berkshire West. He outlined the work ongoing that will provide GPs with better desktop tools that will lead to more effective consultations with neurological patients and speed up referrals to see specialists.

WBNA members were able to engage directly with Dr Perry about a range of issues, including the benefits of working closely with the voluntary sector.

In her annual report, WBNA Chairman, Irene Waters, summarised another very successful year, with further focus group reports completed and circulated, two successful rounds of carers' grants allocated, high impact being made at key NHS meetings at both Berkshire West and Thames Valley level, all delivered within a budget of under £4k p.a. and with another exciting conference to look forward to in 2016.

Grants for carers' breaks

We are delighted that Berkshire Community Foundation has now entrusted us with a third round of funds so that we can continue to distribute more grants of up to £300 each, to help carers take breaks from caring. Applicants must live in the local authority areas of West Berkshire, Reading or Wokingham and provide care for at least fifteen hours a week. Subject to a one-year gap between applications we are pleased to announce that previously successful applicants may now apply for a further grant. Funds are limited and will be allocated on a priority basis.

The application form is simple. Applications should be received before 31st December and successful grants spent within six months of the award. Details are on the application form. Apply to johnmholtbsc@aol.com

Focus group for the recently diagnosed

To help inform discussions taking place within the NHS Berkshire West Neuro Steering Group, WBNA held a focus group in September on 'Experiences of being diagnosed recently with a neurological condition'. Those taking part reported a mix of good and not-so-good experiences, and generally a disjointed, slow and poorly supported process. A report is in preparation and recommendations will follow.

West Berkshire Therapy Centre

This important facility, for which WBNA is the principal backer, has moved temporarily to The Sports Pavilion, The Moors Playing Field, The Moors, Thatcham RG19 3AZ.

West Berkshire Therapy Centre is in the final six, 'pitching to the panel' for £32k to obtain a wider range of power-assisted equipment. We urge readers to take part in the public vote that will help the Centre to secure these funds, which will add much needed extra capacity, including some new power-assisted machines that can provide help with practical things such as getting out of a chair more easily and help in improving balance, using more interactive technology to help the brain to re-learn how to communicate better with muscles. The link to vote for West Berkshire Therapy Centre is: <http://www.greenham-common-trust.co.uk/the-greenham-exchange/vote>

The 'Pitch to the Panel' event will take place at Newbury Corn Exchange on Thursday 12 November. To reserve your seat contact the Corn Exchange Box Office on 0845 5218 218 or visit <http://cornexchangenew.com/events/info/the-greenham-exchange-getting-the-community-together>. Tickets are free, limited to two per applicant and your vote on the night will count.

WBNA conference 2016

Our 2016 neuro conference will be an all-day event at the Arlington Arts Centre near Newbury, on Tuesday, 3rd May, with Neuro-rehab guru Professor Derick Wade our keynote speaker. The theme will be *'The relationship between*

Primary, Secondary and Tertiary Neurological Care'. We have secured a very strong team of speakers and the format of the event will involve plenty of opportunity for delegates to interact with them. The thrust of this Conference is about service integration and improving the patient experience.

Whitehall update

Following a request from the national Neurological Alliance, the Public Accounts Committee started a neurology review in October. This will include calling in NHS England and the Department of Health to give evidence. The review will focus on the issues identified in the recent National Audit Office (NAO) progress report on neurology services, which showed a number of areas of poor progress.

WBNA Secretary needed!

We are still looking for a Secretary, should anyone with the skills and time be available. To find out more contact John on johnmholtb@sc@aol.com

Dates for your diary

Open meeting:

Thursday 12th November
St Joseph's Church Hall, Newbury.
1.45 for 2 pm. Everyone welcome!

Conference 2016

Tuesday 3rd May 2016
Pre-booking essential, details to follow

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