MS
Multiple Sclerosis Society

No. 183 June 2012

Teamspirit

For branch officers and national support group committee members

Welcome to the June edition of Teamspirit.

Contents

Don’t forget – the information in the first five sections is for **everyone**, wherever you are in the UK.

Get in touch

We’re always keen to hear your feedback, so if you have any comments, suggestions or ideas email **teamspirit@mssociety.org.uk**, phone 020 8438 0928 or write to Teamspirit, MS Society, 372 Edgware Road, London NW2 6ND.

If you’re a newsletter editor, email **teamspirit@mssociety.org.uk** to receive a version of Teamspirit that you can copy and paste into your branch or regional newsletter.

Branch donations

Branch or group	Description	Earmarked	Research
Basingstoke & District			£2,000.00
Braintree			£500.00
Cannock & District			£2,500.00
Coalville & District	Cambridge Myelin Repair 2011-2015	£2,500.00	
Coalville & District	Stem Cell Research	£2,500.00	
Cumbernauld & District			£25.00
East Grinstead & District	MS Nurses	£1,500.00	
East Hertfordshire & West Essex	Cambridge Myelin Repair 2011-2015	£5,000.00	£5,000.00
Great Yarmouth & District	Cambridge Myelin Repair 2011-2015	£1,000.00	
Harrogate & District	Cambridge Myelin Repair 2011-2015	£1,250.00	
Harrogate & District	Fairer Financial Assistance	£500.00	
Harrogate & District	Stem Cell Research	£1,250.00	
Horsham & District	Cambridge Myelin Repair 2011-2015	£2,500.00	
Horsham & District	Stem Cell Research	£2,500.00	
Hull, Beverley Borough & Holderness			£736.50
Llandrindod Wells & District	MS Nurses	£1,000.00	£2,000.00
Lothian-wide Branch	Lothian-wide Branch	£29.60	
Plymouth, Liskeard and Districts	MS Nurses	£500.00	£500.00
Skegness & District	MS Nurses	£300.00	
South East Cheshire	Cambridge Myelin Repair 2011-2015	£3,000.00	

continued overleaf

Branch donations

Branch or group	Description	Earmarked	Research
Stanhope & Weardale	Magnetic Resonance Imaging	£1,000.00	
Stanhope & Weardale	MS Helpline	£1,000.00	£2,000.00
Tameside Glossop & District	Cambridge Myelin Repair 2011-2015	£1,000.00	
Wandsworth	Fairer Financial Assistance	£1,000.00	£1,000.00
Wandsworth	Tissue Bank	£1,000.00	
Winchester & District			£500.00
Wirral	Cambridge Myelin Repair 2011-2015	£600.00	
Worksop & District			£1,000.00
Totals		**£30,929.60**	**£17,761.50**

These are donations recorded in April and May 2012.

Report from MS Society Board meeting, 31 May 2012

Welcome to this update on key aspects from the work of the MS Society's Board of Trustees following its meeting on 31 May 2012. The full Board papers are available on the MS Society's website at **www.mssociety.org.uk/ms-resources/board-papers-2012-may**

Regular reports

Key features in the Chief Executive's update to the Board and the latest management accounts were:

- The transfer of the MS Society's four respite care homes has now been completed, in line with the Board's decision on the respite care review in June 2010 and the endorsement of members at the 2010 AGM. Another key element of the respite care review was the implementation of the short breaks strategy; the Board was updated on the number of grants that have been awarded so far in 2012 and the work which is taking place to increase access to short breaks.
- MS Life was held in Manchester on 14 and 15 April, with over 3,250 attendees.
- The report 'Fighting back: ordinary people battling the everyday effects of MS' was launched during MS Week; the report received a significant amount of media coverage increasing awareness of MS and its effects.
- The financial health of the MS Society was reported to be generally good, with a lower than budgeted deficit reported for the first quarter of 2012.

AGM 2012

The Board approved the programme for the AGM 2012. This will take place on 15 September 2012, at the Marriott Hotel Regent's Park, London.

Palliative and End of Life Care Strategy

A presentation was delivered to the Board on the implementation of the Society's approach to palliative and end of life care. The Board was provided with an overview of the implementation plan and the intended outcomes from the work which will take place over the next two years.

Neurological Commissioning Support – annual update

The Board noted the annual update from Neurological Commissioning Support (NCS). NCS is a joint initiative between the MS Society, Parkinsons UK and the Motor Neurone Disease Association, which works to deliver better outcomes for people with long-term neurological conditions.

Next Board meeting

The next meeting of the Board will be held at MS National Centre on Thursday 5 July 2012. If you would like to attend as an observer please contact Susan George, Governance Manager, at **governance@mssociety.org.uk** or 0208 438 0862. The key issues for discussion at this meeting are likely to include:

- Annual report and accounts for 2011
- AGM 2012 booklet

If you have any comments or questions please contact me at **sgillespie@mssociety.org.uk** or write to me at MS National Centre, 372 Edgware Road, London NW2 6ND.

Thank you for your work and support of our efforts to provide the best outcomes for people affected by MS.

Yours sincerely,

Simon Gillespie
Chief Executive
June 2012

MS Society AGM, 15 September 2012

Our AGM this year takes place on Saturday 15 September at the Marriott Hotel Regent's Park in Swiss Cottage, London.

MS Society members who are eligible to vote (fully paid-up on 16 June 2012) will receive full voting information on or around 2 August and will be able to vote online, by post or in person.

The AGM will be shown live on our website **www.mssociety.org.uk**.

Open Day at MS National Centre

We are pleased to invite all MS Society volunteers to join us at our Open Day at MS National Centre in London on Tuesday 27 November 2012.

The day will be an opportunity for you to meet MS Society staff and other volunteers, and ask questions and discuss issues that affect you.

MS National Centre will be fully open and there will be plenty of time for you to tour the building, talk to different teams based at MS National Centre and chat with other volunteers who attend.

All MS Society volunteers are invited, so please let your branch or support group members know about the event. The day is likely to be particularly interesting and useful for volunteers who are new in post.

Further information about the day and how to book will be included in future editions of Teamspirit. In the meantime, if you have any questions please contact the Volunteering team on 020 8438 0944 or email **volunteering@mssociety.org.uk**.

Travel expenses should be claimed from your branch or support group. If there are financial limitations, please contact the Volunteering team.

We look forward to seeing you on the day.

News and events

MS Week 2012

MS Week 2012 got off to a flying start on Monday 30 April with the launch of our report Fighting back, which attracted media coverage from BBC Breakfast, ITV's Daybreak, and newspapers and radio all over the UK.

The report highlighted the difficulties which people with MS and other conditions can face in everyday life, based on two surveys we commissioned. The polls – one of 2,000 British adults, and a separate poll of 1,400 people with MS – revealed a huge lack of understanding about conditions like MS, and we used the shocking results to get media coverage for our Join the Fightback campaign.

Did you share our videos? If you did, you're in good company. The three videos we created to explain to people what some of the symptoms of MS can feel like, plus a video interview with Janis Winehouse, and two videoed 'flashmob' events in Scotland, got more than 20,000 views during MS Week.

The videos received overwhelmingly positive comments from Facebook viewers, mainly from people with MS. One viewer of the wellies film said:

'My god, that is so much what it feels like – I've tried to tell people it feels like wading through sand and they don't get it. Now I can tell them how to find out for themselves.'

On Twitter, celebrity support played a big part in sending people to to our campaign website. Among them were fashion presenter Gok Wan (whose own message was retweeted over 350 times), celebrity Paris Hilton, pop groups JLS, The Vaccines and The Maccabees, actress Rebecca Front, DJ Scott Mills and Olympic athlete Sally Gunnell.

A direct mail pack was sent to 65,000 supporters, encouraging people to visit the campaign website and donate. In addition, tailored emails were sent to around 95,000 supporters. We have set a target for this direct mail campaign to deliver £120,000 in net income. Over 2,500 people registered for Cake Break packs. We have set a target of £192,000 net income. It is too early to report on how successful these fundraising activities have been, but will up date everyone in a future TeamSpirit.

In addition to Cake Breaks, several events were held associated with MS Week, including supporter receptions in Belfast, London and Edinburgh, which attracted over 200 guests between them. The media report, presented at the London and Edinburgh receptions, was very well received and a reprint has been ordered due to high demand.

You can still encourage people to Join the Fightback

- Visit **www.msfightback.org.uk** and share the videos via your social networks
- Encourage people you know to Join the Fightback and donate

Our official stationery – legal requirement changes

If you have some old, out-of-date MS Society stationery hanging around, be aware that legal changes mean you must take action now.

We have to ensure that we are all using our new stationery at all times as it is a legal requirement. If we don't take care of this we could be fined and it could cause confusion, e.g. donors could write cheques to the wrong organisation, or letters could be addressed to our former Chair.

To help with this, we need to ascertain if you've still got the old stationery. Please check all your current stationery. If it says that we are The Multiple Sclerosis Society of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, our charity number is 207495, or our Chair is Tony Kennan, it's old. You can either recycle it locally, give to a school for scrap paper, or you can use stickers to cover up the old text with the updated information.

The stickers make the change to:

'Multiple Sclerosis Society is a company limited by guarantee (07451571) and a registered charity in England and Wales (1139257) and Scotland (SC041990).'

What you need to do now:

1. Update documents and other supplies

Items to be changed include stationery, literature and publications and electronic templates such as letterheads and newsletters – anything that has our old charity information on it. We'll take care of everything that is sent from National Centre, but you'll need to take care of the documents and templates that you use.

You can do this by:

- ordering new stock which will have the new charity and company numbers and can be ordered from our online shop **http://oscos2.bmc-ics.com/mss2/public/index.php**
- changing the information on electronic templates such as letterheads and newsletters
- amending existing stock, by covering the old information with a sticker. These can be ordered through the Volunteering team by emailing **volunteering@mssociety.org.uk**

2. Update contracts and service level agreements

All contracts and service level agreements you hold should have been amended to show the new numbers. Things like:

- contracts for services such as cleaning and gardening, physiotherapy, counselling and complementary therapies. If any of your contracts are still under the old charity name and number (The Multiple Sclerosis Society of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, charity number 207495) and have not been amended, please contact your local area staff member.

- All leasehold and freehold property, including branch premises and agreements to rent out branch premises, should be held under the name of our subsidiary company, MS Society Nominees Ltd. If your branch owns or leases land or premises under a different name, please contact your local area staff member

When do the changes need to be done by?

As this is a legal requirement, the changes must be made by the end of April 2012.

MS Society publications

New edition

Complementary and alternative medicine (MS Essentials 18) *Second edition May 2012*

This booklet looks at some of the complementary and alternative therapies commonly used by people with MS. It also suggests things to consider before choosing any therapy.

Please recycle all old editions of these booklets.

Sample copies of these booklets are to be sent to all branches in June.

For a list of all our key publications showing the latest editions and revisions visit the website: **www.mssociety.org.uk/resources** or search for the phrase 'key publications'.

If you would like copies of any of these titles, visit our online shop at **http://shop.mssociety.org.uk.** If you need a login for bulk orders please contact the Information Team (details below).

If you do not have internet access you can telephone the orderline on 0300 1000 801.

Information Team:
email **infoteam@mssociety.org.uk** or
call 020 8438 0799 (weekdays 9am-4pm).

Feedback on publications

We'd like to know what people think about our booklets.

If you've read an MS Society booklet to learn more about MS, please tell us how useful itís been.

And if it hasn't been useful, we need to know that too – it's the only way we can make it better.

Please encourage anyone who reads our booklets to give us their feedback – whether they are people with MS, family, friends and carers or people who've got no direct connection to MS. If they've read the information, we'd like to know what they think.

The short survey is online – just follow the link on our website page: **www.mssociety.org.uk/resources** or go direct to **https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/RMH9PGJ.** It'll take about five minutes to fill in.

Or we can go through it on the phone – call the Information Team on 020 8438 0799.

The big benefits FAQ

There's lots of change going on around benefits right now, so here are answers to some of the key questions you might be facing. There's more information on our website and in our booklets – take a look at 'How can I get involved?'

Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)

What is ESA?

ESA replaced Incapacity Benefit and Income Support as the benefit for people who are out of work due to illness or disability.

What's the Work Capability Assessment?

This is the assessment for ESA. As well as a form to fill in, most people are invited for a face-to-face assessment. The assessment asks if you can manage different activities. It works out a score according to a set of criteria, called 'descriptors'. Read more in our ESA booklet and at **www.mssociety.org.uk/esa**. If you are invited to a face-to-face assessment, you must attend – unless you have a good reason not to. If you do not, your benefit and your claim for ESA may be stopped.

Why is ESA being stopped for some people?

The Government has brought in a one year time limit for people on contributory ESA in the Work Related Activity Group. Read more about this at **www.mssociety.org.uk/esa**. We recommend that anyone affected contacts a local advice agency to discuss their options.

We continue to monitor the impact of this policy on people with MS, and are campaigning for the time limit to be removed or extended. If you are affected and want to share your story to help our campaign, please contact the campaigns team at **campaigns@mssociety.org.uk**, visit **www.surveymonkey.com/s/msstories** or call 020 8438 0700.

Disability Living Allowance (DLA)/ Personal Independence Payment (PIP)

What's PIP?

What's happening with DLA?

Am I going to lose my benefit?

The Government intends to replace DLA with a new benefit, PIP, for people between the ages of 16 and 64. This will have some similarities with DLA. For example, it will not be means-tested and you can get it whether you are in or out of work. The eligibility rules are still being developed, but they are likely to be stricter and we expect that fewer people will qualify. However, the MS Society is working hard with the DWP to limit the impact on people with MS.

When will I be re-assessed and how will this happen?

PIP will be open to new claims from June 2013. A few people on DLA will be re-assessed in pilots in the North-West from April 2013, but most people on DLA will be re-assessed between January 2014 and March 2016. People on DLA will be invited to apply for PIP at random, or when their fixed-term DLA award comes to an end, or if they have a change in circumstances.

The assessment is still being developed, and the DWP have not yet appointed a company to do the assessments. The Government has stated that most people will go through a face-to-face assessment, but the MS Society is pushing for people with MS to be awarded PIP on the basis of paper evidence alone wherever possible, and working closely with the DWP in the development of the assessment to ensure it's fair for people with MS.

Will people with indefinite/ lifetime awards still need to be re-assessed?

Yes, but not all assessments will involve a face-to-face re-assessment. Almost all PIP awards will be fixed term, rather than indefinite, and people will have more regular reviews. However, the MS Society is pushing for people with MS to be given longer term awards.

What does this mean for people over 65?

Those who turn 65 before 8 April 2013 will not be re-assessed for PIP and will remain on DLA. Those who turn 65 after 8 April will be reassessed for PIP. Once you are receiving PIP, you can continue to receive it past the age of 65, just like with DLA.

These and more questions are answered on our benefits information pages online at **www.mssociety.org.uk/esa** and **www.mssociety.org.uk/dla**. You can also find the latest information about PIP at **www.dwp.gov.uk/policy/disability**.

How can I get involved?

- Sign up for the latest campaign updates **www.mssociety.org.uk/campaigns-community**
- Contact your local MP about the issue
- Encourage people to share their stories at **www.surveymonkey.com/s/msstories**
- Make our three benefits booklets easily available:
    - Employment and support allowance (ESA) (Essentials 29)*
    - Claiming Disability Living Allowance (Essentials 13)
    - Benefits and MS (Essentials 09)

  Order online or call the Information Team on 020 8438 0799.
- Signpost people to specialist services such as Citizens Advice or the Disability Law Service (DLS). For example, the DLS might help if someone in England or Wales has a problem with a benefits appeal or complaint.
- Develop partnerships with your local Citizens Advice service to enable people affected by MS to be seen quickly by a dedicated case worker who knows about the issues. Be inspired by South Devon branch. Their local arrangement with Citizens Advice over the last three years has shown the total value of confirmed benefits awarded is in excess of £397,000! They have just secured Lottery Funding worth £94,000 to cover the next 5 years of the project.

- Organise a benefits awareness session in partnership with local experts (Citizens Advice or similar). Speak to your local area staff to find out more about the 'How to' guide for delivering Benefits and MS Awareness talks.

ESA booklet – correction

Please note – in copies of the ESA booklet sent out before 4 May there was an error in the insert.

On pages P5 and P8 of the blue insert we indicated that certain tasks for Activities 8, 9, 10 and 15 satisfy the 'limited capability for work-related activity assessment'. This is not the case. These tasks do not satisfy the 'limited capability for work-related activity assessment'.

Copies to download were corrected on Friday 4 May.

Copies sent out from the mailing house and the Information Team since that date all have correction stickers on top left of pages P2 and P6 of the insert:

CORRECTION – Although highlighted in bold, the tasks in Activities 8, 9, 10 and 15 do not satisfy the 'limited capability for work-related activity assessment'.

If you require stickers to correct existing copies of the insert, please ask the Information Team – **infoteam@mssociety.org.uk** or 020 8438 0799.

Safeguarding policies and guidance

We have updated our policies on safeguarding adults, and safeguarding children and young people. Because of slight differences in the laws across the UK, we now have different versions for Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and England. The policies are all available on the volunteers website: **http://volunteers.mssociety.org.uk**

We have also produced two guidance booklets which clearly explain what you need to know about safeguarding and what you need to do in the rare case where there may be a safeguarding issue. One booklet is aimed specifically at those volunteers who may fulfil a 'lead' role at times, for example those who run local events, manage other volunteers, or chair a branch or support group. The other booklet is for all volunteers. Both will help you understand the role you can play as a volunteer in safeguarding adults and children and young people. The booklets are being distributed throughout the summer, so watch out for your copy soon.

For more information on safeguarding, please email **volunteering@mssociety.org.uk**

Update from the MS support steering group

The MS Support steering group held its latest meeting on Wednesday 9 May. The group includes support volunteers and MS Society staff, and is chaired by Judi Rhys, Director MS Society Cymru.

A consultation programme is planned regarding support offered to Lead Support Volunteers (LSVs) with a view to offering LSVs ongoing peer support and training from 2013. If you are a LSV and would like to be involved, please contact Phoebe White, Learning and Development Manager (volunteers) on 020 8438 0942 or email **pwhite@mssociety.org.uk**.

We will shortly produce a simple tool to help LSVs and staff members establish when a volunteer is acting in the role of a support volunteer and therefore should be invited to participate in the MS Support training programme.

There are 88 newly recruited support volunteers where we are currently rolling out MS Support. With 202 existing branch volunteers moving into the support volunteer role, we now have 290 volunteers in branch support teams across the roll out areas and regions, representing approximately half of the UK.

As TeamSpirit went to press, we have delivered 37 training events and 211 volunteers have attended the training. As part of ongoing training provision in the West area of England after the pilot, we have delivered 11 further training events with 47 support volunteers attending this year. Feedback from training events so far has been very positive; more than 85 per cent of people giving feedback rated the day as good or very good.

The Steering Group meeting in February agreed actions to resolve issues around safeguarding vulnerable adults. The guidance has now been developed and will be sent out to all support volunteers shortly. Lead support volunteers/support officers will also receive this year's Disability Rights Handbook in this mail out.

Each year we run a 'design evaluation' process on the MS Support training which includes both volunteers and staff. This summer we will conduct a number of telephone interviews as well as run two focus groups, one in the north of the UK and one in the south. These will look at participant feedback from each day and discuss themes from the training delivery to date. This process will ensure the training continues to be relevant and useful to support volunteers.

If you have any questions about the group, the key messages in this article or would like to raise any issues for the steering group to discuss, please contact Phoebe White on 020 8438 0942 or via **pwhite@mssociety.org.uk**.

MS Society and MS Therapy Centres – working together

MS National Therapy Centres and the MS Society have a long historical relationship and many people are already members of both organisations.

Many MS Society branches and local Therapy Centres are already working together to ensure that they are able to improve the range and quality of services provided to local MS communities, maximising the effective use of the limited resources available.

In the last issue of TeamSpirit, we reported on some MS Society branch and Therapy Centre relationships that were working really well and had improved services and support for the local MS community.

This article looks at some successes in sharing resources, and a future article will look at joint fundraising.

Sharing fundraising and resources

Rotherham and Sheffield branch of the MS Society had no premises for its meetings so approached the local therapy centre to see if they could hold the meetings there.

Branch Chair John Bettles and his Therapy Centre counterpart got the relationship going three years ago by agreeing to work closer together. The branch trialled meeting at the centre and also opened its meetings to the centre members, diversifying the audience and reaching more people.

According to John, the relationship was a bit frosty at first. It was ‘people throwing stones and no-one talking.’

Now, because of an open and honest relationship between the two organisations, there is a ‘win win’ situation – for MS Society members, for the people who attend the therapy centres, in short, for all local people affected by MS.

The relationship has gone from strength to strength with representation of both organisations on each committee. The branch and the Therapy Centre have shared fundraisers at events and plan to run joint activities in the future.

The branch agreed to refurbish the centre in-lieu of market value rental for five years and pay a nominal charge for unlimited – but reasonable – use of all the centre facilities, plus four days of admin support.

The relationship has given local people affected by MS much more in the way of joined-up options and support.

Working together has made both of their offers stronger. It’s a partnership that works.

Exeter is another area where resources are shared.

Exeter branch rents a room in the local Therapy Centre and funds a telephone line with broadband and computer access. The Therapy Centre is encouraged to use the room and the facilities when the branch isn’t using them. The branch pays the

Therapy Centre to administer some services e.g. therapies, Citizens Advice Bureau and helpline number.

Other occasional cross-over areas include fundraising, transport and volunteers.

Top tips for closer working

1 There does need to be a genuine wish and will to develop and improve existing relationships and improve the services for people affected by MS

2 Get both committees on board with the initiative

3 It is essential to meet with the right people, be open minded and to think creatively

4 Be patient and be prepared to each 'give a bit', and keep dialogue going

5 Remember to use local staff for further guidance and support.

6 Think holistically about the whole MS community – for example, if you need a venue for a meeting or event, consider your local Therapy Centre if you have one – it might not only solve your need for space but it keeps more money in the MS community too

Are you doing anything to work closer together in your area?
Share your successes with your counterparts in other branches by emailing **teamspirit@mssociety.org.uk.** Or contact your local MS Society staff member, who can also support you to develop relationships locally.

Fundraising

Summer raffle issue – please inform your members

If you're based in England, Wales or Scotland, please could you include a notice to your members in your next newsletter about an issue with the summer draw.

As you may know, tickets for our summer raffle draw were sent with the March/April issue of MS Matters. Unfortunately, due to circumstances completely out of our control, a number of replies returned between 1 and 18 May were delivered in error to the Royal Mail's 'National Returns Centre', and not to the MS Society. As a result, some people will not be entered into the draw on 29 June as their replies have not reached us. No payment has been taken for these tickets.

To meet the requirements of our licence with the Gambling Commission, we need to ensure we make this as public as possible, and we would appreciate your help. Draft wording is set out below.

If you have any questions about this issue, please contact Sarah Briggs in the direct marketing team at MS National Centre on 020 8438 0847 or **sbriggs@mssociety.org.uk.**
Thank you for your help and understanding.

MS Society summer raffle: due to circumstances completely out of our control, a number of replies to the raffle (sent out with your March/April MS Matters) were delivered in error to the Royal Mail's 'National Returns Centre', and not to the MS Society. This means that unfortunately, if you sent in your tickets between 1 and 18 May, you may not have been entered into the draw (scheduled for 29 June).

No payment has been taken or will be taken for those replies that did not reach the MS Society. If you think you sent back your responses during this period and would like to discuss the issue, please contact supporter services on 0800 100 133.

If you sold tickets on to family and friends, weíd like to encourage you to check if your cheque has been cashed. If not, please contact us as soon as possible to arrange repayment. Alternatively, please return the money to the buyer. Please explain that there was a postal error completely outside of our control which meant their entry did not arrive in time for the draw.

For more information, visit **www.mssociety.org.uk/raffle**

Fundraising

Appeals update

In March you and your members may have received a fundraising letter from Simon Gillespie about the 13 exceptional new research projects that we're committing to this year. The letter raised over £117,000. Please pass on our thanks to anyone you know who donated.

During MS Week, a letter went out asking people to join the Fightback campaign. Donations are still coming in and we'll include an update in your next Teamspirit.

More appeals news will be in the next advances newsletter. This will go out in July to everyone who has recently made a donation or taken part in an event. The newsletter gives us a chance to tell supporters more about how they're helping to beat MS.

In June we'll be calling people who have a monthly gift to the MS Society to update them on our work and to see if they would like to increase their gift. Active members will not be called but please be aware that the campaign is taking place.

If you have any questions or feedback about our fundraising appeals, please contact Sarah Briggs in the direct marketing team at MS National Centre on 020 8438 0847 or email **sbriggs@mssociety.org.uk**.

Could we be on your present list?

Do you know someone with a birthday coming up? Planning a wedding? Or celebrating an anniversary?

Many supporters choose to celebrate their special occasions with us and raise much needed funds for the MS Society along the way. We have free Party Packs available to order which include a party guide, donation box, balloons and everything needed to make your event a success.

Couples planning their special day can support us in many ways, for example by buying MS Society wedding favours or asking for donations instead of gifts.

Filippa and Barrie decided to ask for donations instead of gifts as they had a fully equipped home: 'We are very proud that we raised over £1,500 for the MS Society which helped make our special day just a little more special.'

To request leaflets to help promote celebration giving in your local area or if you have any questions please contact **celebration@mssociety.org.uk**.

For more information visit **www.mssociety.org.uk/celebrate**

Crumbs! What a success

A big thank you to all branches and volunteers for their fantastic efforts getting involved in Cake Break 2012. We couldn't have done it without you! We hope that you have enjoyed being part of Cake Break – please email us with any photos, stories or feedback about Cake Break 2012 at **cakebreak@mssociety.org.uk**. We would love to hear from you. The date for next year's Cake Break has been confirmed as **Friday 3 May 2013** so please put this in your diary! The final total raised for Cake Break 2012 will be announced at **www.mssociety.org.uk/cakebreak** soon! Thanks again for all your support.

Managing 'free reserves'

Managing our 'free reserves' might sound dull and complicated, but it is of great importance to branches and to the MS Society as a whole.

If we don't get the level of free reserves that we hold right, we may not be able to meet the needs of people affected by MS in your local area. And we could damage our chances of raising the money we need to fightback against MS.

What are our 'free reserves'?

Free reserves represent amounts held by a branch and by the organisation that, because they are not restricted and they have not been invested in fixed assets, can easily be used to meet current financial needs.

The amount of free reserves that you are holding in your local branch can be calculated by deducting fixed assets and restricted funds from the total reserves figure in the branch proforma. The vast majority of the free reserves held by branches are held as cash.

Getting the level right

Too much

If we accumulate free reserves, we are effectively choosing to keep cash in our bank account, rather than spending it to meet the needs of people affected by MS. The Charity Commission regards holding excess reserves as a potential breach of trust as we are not using the money as the donor intended in fighting MS.

Accumulating too many free reserves also affects our ability to raise funds to finance projects in the future. Grant providers and major donors have told us that a key factor they consider when deciding whether to award grants or make donations is the level of free reserves that a charity holds.

If we already hold a large amount of free reserves, donors feel that we should fund projects using the monies that we already have and so they reduce their donations or decide not to donate at all. This can also affect your individual branch's ability to raise funds locally.

Branches' reserves play a big part in painting the Society's overall reserves picture and contribute significantly to the overall figures of the Society: in 2010 two-thirds of total society funds were held in branches.

Too little

If we cut our free reserves too far, we may need to reduce activities if times become hard and funding becomes short. This is where effective financial planning and budgeting becomes important (see the Treasurers Handbook chapter 7).

Under the branch financial rules (Treasurers Handbook Appendix C section 9) branches must review their level of reserves at least annually. The rules also govern the amount of reserves a branch can hold:-

Finance

‘Branches are required to hold no more than the equivalent of one year’s average expenditure, in order to meet known obligations (i.e. excluding depreciation and donations to the national office). Additionally branches can also hold a reserve for the purchase, maintenance or repair of assets or for other long term commitments approved by the national office.’

One year’s average expenditure should be enough of a financial buffer that there would be enough time to identify the issues and take action to overcome the problem, if something happens which affects a branch’s ability to raise funds or increases its running costs significantly. Restricting the buffer to one yearís average expenditure should also minimise the effect that holding too much free reserves will have on prospective donors.

For England

Are you attending the annual meeting of the England Council on Saturday 30 June?

The meeting will include a presentation on stem cell research by Professor Robin Franklin, Director of the MS Society Cambridge Centre for Myelin Repair, information about the work of the England Council over the past year and plans for the future, plus an open session for your suggestions and time with Hilary Sears, Chairman of the Board of Trustees.

To book your place, contact Lauren Stevens on 020 8438 0789 or email **englandcouncil@mssociety.org.uk** by Monday 25 June. Please do let us know if you have any particular dietary or access requirements.

We know that travelling to Birmingham is not an option for everyone. If you have a question and cannot attend, please do email **englandcouncil@mssociety.org.uk.** If time allows, we will include your question in the open session. However, all questions and answers will be added to the England Council section of the MS Society website after the meeting.

Regional Events

North

Saturday 23 June	Living with MS, Get Active – Newcastle
Wednesday 27 June	Volunteer induction (North of England) – Annitsford
Friday 29 June	MS Support training day 4 (Cheshire & Merseyside) – Warrington
Saturday 30 June	Volunteer induction (North of England) – Darlington
Saturday 14 July	MS Support training day 1 (Yorkshire & the Humber) – Leeds

East

Saturday 7 July	Symptom management event – Lincoln
Wednesday 11 July	Volunteer forum (East Midlands) – Derby
Tuesday 24 July	Volunteer forum (East Midlands) – Leicester
Monday 30 July	Volunteer forum (East Midlands) – Lincoln
Tuesday 31 July	MS Support training day 1 (Thames Valley) – Maidenhead

For England

London & South East

Saturday 23 June	MS Research update – London
Saturday 23 June	Volunteer induction (Surrey & Sussex) – Crawley
Tuesday 3 July	Benefits & MS information talk – Romford
Wednesday 4 July	Chairs' forum (Kent) – Maidstone
Saturday 7 July	MS Support engagement event (Surrey & Sussex) – Crawley
Wednesday 11 July	Volunteer forum (South London)
Saturday 14 July	Volunteer 'Thank you' event – Bromley
Tuesday 17 July	Branch chairs' and secretaries' forum (Surrey & Sussex) – Crawley
Sunday 22 July	Family Fun Day – central London

West

Tuesday 19 June	West Midlands South Zone meeting – Westmead, Hopwood
Tuesday 26 June	West Midlands North Zone meeting – Roman Way, Cannock
Tuesday 26 June	MS Support training day 4 (Wessex & West) – Trowbridge
Wednesday 27 June	Volunteer induction (Wessex & West) – Gillingham, Dorset
Thursday 28 June	MS Support training day 1 (West Midlands) – Birmingham
Wednesday 4 July	Chairs' induction (Wessex & West) – Bath
Tuesday 10 July	MS Support training day 2 (West Midlands) – Birmingham

If you are interested in the support volunteer role, please contact your local area staff member. If you are a support volunteer and you have not yet attended the training session(s) you are interested in attending, please email **volunteertraining@mssociety.org.uk** to request a booking form.

For all other events, please contact your local staff member for more information and to book a place.

Family In Focus Project

Our **Annual BBQ** will take place on **Saturday 23 June 2012** at 2pm at The Resource Centre, 34 Annadale Avenue, Belfast This is a fun day out for all the family including a bouncy castle, face painting, nail art and much more.

Young Peoples Summer Camp at Share Centre Lisnaskea will take place on **Tuesday 14 & Wednesday 15 August 2012**. This project is an overnight stay for young people affected by MS across NI aged from 12 years to 16 years.

For more information or to book your place on any of the above events please contact your local ADO or the Resource Centre on 028 9080 2802 or email **nidevelopmentteam@mssociety.org.uk**.

Our Family In Focus programme continues to offer a ‘Time to Talk’ for families. This offers families the chance to access counselling to help them deal with impact of MS on their daily lives. This service is open to the person with MS, their carers, partners and family members as individuals or as a group.

The service is completely confidential and available at Relate NI offices across Northern Ireland. If you are interested in accessing support from the programme please contact Relate NI directly on 028 9032 3454 to make an appointment. Please remember to say that you are accessing the service through the MS Society NI and your appointment will be fast tracked.

Gala Ball 2012

It’s never too early to start planning for our annual Gala Ball. A huge thank you to those branches that supported our 2011 event. The 2012 event will take place at the Ramada Hotel, Shawís Bridge, Belfast on **Saturday 24 November** – final programme to be announced.

The feedback from last year was extremely positive so if you are unsure about supporting or attending please have a chat with someone from a branch that did attend in 2011.

Call the Fundraising Team on Tel 028 9080 2802 for information about these and other events.

BITC Charity Partner

Following on from the announcement that the MS Society Northern Ireland has been chosen as ‘Charity of the Year’ for 2012 by Energia, a member of the Viridian group, we are delighted to announce that we have also been selected as Charity Partner by BITC Business in the Community, Northern Ireland.

The partnership was launched at the BITC ‘Gala Awards Dinner’ held at the Titanic Building Belfast on Thursday 31 May 2012.

Staff from BITC will be participating in MSSNI fundraising activities as well as planning their own fundraising activities and events – with our support.

For Scotland

An opportunity to share good practice

Would you like to exchange ideas with other MS Society volunteers in your area?

This autumn, we are holding five Area Forums to give you the chance to meet others volunteering in your area, and to share good practice.

Each forum will be chaired by a member of the MS Society Scotland's Council and will showcase the good work being done locally. There will be plenty of opportunity for questions and discussion.

Dates and venues:

Fife, Central and Tayside
Friday 24 August
The Falkirk Stadium

East and South
Friday 28 September
Mining Museum, Newtowngrange

Highlands and Islands
Saturday 29 September
Inverness – venue TBC

West
Saturday 6 October
Holiday Inn Theatreland, Glasgow

To book, and for more information, please visit **www.mssociety.org.uk/events**, and search by entering the date. If you have further questions, please get in touch with your Area Development Officer (ADO).

Update on Support Volunteer training in Scotland

We are delighted that fifty volunteers are currently taking part in the first round of Support Volunteer training in Edinburgh and Glasgow. This includes ten volunteers currently involved in support roles, nineteen volunteers already involved with their branch in another role, and twenty one brand new volunteers to the MS Society!

Weíll be repeating all four Support Volunteer training courses in the autumn, so there will be another chance for you to attend if you missed the first round. We will also be commencing Support Volunteer recruitment and training in the Highlands and Islands area. This will begin with a series of information sessions in October.

We'll be in touch with all branches soon with dates and venues, and information on how to book.

For Scotland

Induction sessions for branch Chairs

By now, each branch will have had its annual meeting. This may mean that your branch has the same person as Chair, or that you have elected someone new into the role. The role of Chair is a vital one, and whether you have been in the role for some time or are new to the role, we would like to welcome you to an induction session where you can:

- get information about the Chair's role and responsibilities
- identify or refresh the skills needed to undertake the Chair's role effectively
- get tools and tips to help you be confident in leading an MS Society branch committee
- get information and materials which can act as a reference tool in the future
- network with other Chairs

To find out more, or to register your interest in attending an induction session, contact Lynda Boyce on 0131 335 4050 or e-mail **lboyce@mssociety.org.uk.**

General induction sessions can also be arranged for volunteers. Please contact Lynda Boyce to arrange one for your branch.

MSPs pledge to support the fight back against MS

MSPs marked MS Week with a debate in the Scottish Parliament. Leading the debate, George Adam MSP said: 'I want every member who is present to tell the world that they will join the MS Society and fight back against multiple sclerosis.'

MSPs recognised that better access to Self Directed Support and specialist healthcare was needed in some areas, and many raised concerns about the new arrangements for welfare benefits. They congratulated the MS Society's branches and volunteers for the excellent support they provide, and pledged to lend their support in the fight back.

You can read the full transcript of the debate here:

http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/parliamentarybusiness/28862.aspx?r=7002 or call the Scotland Office on 0131 335 4050 for hard copies.

Review of the Neurological Standards published

A peer review in January 2012 looked at how health boards are performing against the Clinical Standards for Neurological Services. The MS Society was involved in the peer review panel and this review has now been published.

You can read the full review online, at **http://www.healthcareimprovementscotland.org/programmes/long_term_conditions/neurological_health_services/peer_review_evaluation.aspx**

Not all of Scotland's health boards are meeting the standards that relate to multiple sclerosis, and we will shortly be submitting our response to this situation. The Scottish government has also announced that it will provide money for the Neurological Alliance of Scotland to establish an Advisory Group to support boards to continue to make improvements, and we will be part of that group.

For more information please contact Policy Officer Jo O'Neill on 0131 335 4050 or email **joneill@mssociety.org.uk.**

For Wales

Annual meeting of Cymru Council

This summer we will be holding our 2012 Annual Meeting at the Future Inns Hotel in Cardiff.

Following last year's successful meeting in Wrexham we would like you to join us on **Saturday 7 July** between 10am - 3.30pm.

Annual meetings are a great opportunity for members to come and see what projects MS Society Cymru is working on and meet other people living with MS across Wales.

This year there will be workshops on Benefits and MS, preparations for the MS Society's 60th birthday celebrations and a presentation on developments in research. We will round off the day with an enjoyable and inspiring 'laughter yoga' session.

If you would like to attend this meeting, then please visit **www.mssociety.org.uk/wales.**

Calling all fundraisers

Are you the fundraising officer or branch or someone who has an interest in fundraising? Iestyn Evans, Area Fundraising Manager, would like to hear from you.

We are keen to look at fundraising plans for branches and support groups, and provide advice and support to help you raise even more money to support people living with MS in Wales.

If you would like to discuss your fundraising plans or would like any advice, then please contact Iestyn on 029 2078 6676 or email **ievans@mssociety.org.uk.**

First birthday for MS Register

Following the successful launch of the world's first MS register at Swansea University in 2011, MS Society Cymru has organised a reception at the National Assembly for Wales to showcase this exciting Wales-based project.

The reception will take place at 12 noon on **Tuesday 10 July** in Conference Room 24 in the T? Hywel building. If you would like to learn more and get involved in this exciting project, please contact Joseph Carter on 029 2078 6676 or email **jcarter@mssociety.org.uk.**

Classifieds

Please share these opportunities in your own publications and networks

Lisnaskea

MS Society Northern Ireland has two fully accessible chalets available for hire at the SHARE village in Lisnaskea. The cost is £150 per week and includes a SHARE fitness leisure pass. Bookings are taken on a first come, first served basis. To book a holiday please contact Mark on 028 9080 2802 or **mhatte@mssociety.org.uk**.

Amberwood Holiday Lodge

West Herts Branch has a holiday lodge at Shorefield Holiday Village, near Lymington, Hampshire, for people with MS, families and carers. The chalet has a master bedroom with en suite shower room, a twin bedded room, bathroom, and lounge/ kitchen area with double fold-out sofa bed. A brand new mobility scooter is also available to use. Bookings can be made by calling Richard Smith on 0770 9235729. (Please leave a message if necessary and we will call you back.)

For Sale:

Professionally converted Renault Master – blue

52 registration. Good condition. Serviced regularly. Very low mileage.

£3000 or near offer.

Seats nine maximum (including driver) and three wheelchairs.

Carries 'Wareham and Purbeck MS' logo.

Contact Rita Harris on 01929 552344 for more information.

Mention of advertisement by the MS Society of products or services is not an endorsement by the MS Society, its volunteers or staff.

Teamspirit directory

MS Society
MS National Centre
372 Edgware Road
London
NW2 6ND
020 8438 0700

MS Society Cymru
Temple Court
Cathedral Road
Cardiff
CF11 9HA
02920 786 676

MS Society
Northern Ireland
The Resource Centre
34 Annadale Avenue
Belfast
BT7 3JJ
02890 802 802

MS Society Scotland
National Office
Ratho Park
88 Glasgow Road
Ratho Station
Newbridge
EH28 8PP
0131 335 4050

Support groups
There are support group for Jewish people, lesbians and gay men, Afro-Caribbean people, Asian people, and former and serving members of the armed forces.
020 8438 0856
susmani@mssociety.org.uk

Find us online
www.mssociety.org.uk

www.facebook.com/mssociety
www.twitter.com/mssocietyuk

www.youngms.org.uk
www.facebook.com/childrenwithMS

Grants

020 8438 0700
grants@mssociety.org.uk
(England, Wales, Northern Ireland)
0131 335 4081
grantsscotland@mssociety.org.uk
(Scotland)

National MS Helpline
0808 800 8000

MS Information Line
020 8438 0799

Membership
020 8438 0759

Volunteering
020 8438 0944

Fundraising
0870 241 3565

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372 Edgware Road
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