

As a local support group, our purpose is to offer friendship and support to anyone affected by Parkinson's in the Reading area. No one should face Parkinson's alone and so we aim to be as accessible as possible offering a wide range of social and therapeutic activities.

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**Edition 20**

**Please note that the views expressed in the newsletter are those of the editor and contributors and do not necessarily represent those of Parkinson's UK.**

Welcome to the latest edition of the PUK Reading Branch Newsletter. I hope you find it informative. If you have recently joined the group, then a very warm welcome to you. If you are not yet a member then you are invited to join – see **Branch Membership Information** below. For the very latest news and information don't forget to visit our website at:

[www.parkinsonsreading.org.uk](http://www.parkinsonsreading.org.uk)

### Note from the Editor:

Apologies for the late arrival of this edition of the Reading and District newsletter. It was delayed so that the outcome of the March 5<sup>th</sup> AGM could be included. To tide you over, you should have received a "Date for your Diary" supplement which can now be discarded.

Nigel Crabb, Branch Secretary  
Tel. 078110 554650

### Branch Membership Information

The suggested donation for 2025 is £10 per person. The easiest way to pay annually is by setting up a Direct Debit to **Parkinsons Disease Society of the UK, Sort Code 20-00-00, Account Number: 43353958** using the reference **"Reading Membership"**. Alternatively, you can pay by cash or cheque, made payable to **'Parkinsons UK - Reading Branch'**, at any of the Reading group meetings. Any questions to [membership@parkinsonsreading.org.uk](mailto:membership@parkinsonsreading.org.uk)

**Not yet registered to receive regular updates.** Download the registration form from the "Contact Us" page of our website and follow the instructions.

## From the Chair

As I write, the sun is shining, and hopefully when you read this, the branch will have had an AGM and elected a newly invigorated committee. A theme that emerged from the AGM was our increased membership, and the challenges and opportunities that creates for us. Greater demand should mean that we can expand the number of activities we support, and widen the range of locations, but at the same time this adds to committee workload.

To a degree, we can afford to take more risks: if a new class doesn't initially attract sufficient members to be viable, we don't have to worry so much about the financial consequences. But we are very aware that times and places will not suit everyone. and we do need feedback to get it right.

If you would have liked to attend an activity but currently are not able to, please let the relevant committee member know – a message "I would love to go to xxxxx but it is the wrong side of town" is much more helpful than blank silence! And fundamentally, with activities and exercise as much as anything else, if you don't use it, you lose it! See a list of what is already on offer on pages 4-6 of this newsletter.

Don't miss out - try something new – we usually offer a first session at no charge and often partners/carers can also attend for free. Come to one of the recently started "Singing for Parkinson's" sessions – it's good for Parkinson's, sociable and great fun! And of course, coming up we have a full programme of Branch meetings, Cafes and social events. Look out for an update on what we will be doing on World Parkinson's Day on April 11<sup>th</sup> and the Whitchurch Arts Café is on Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> April.

Keep well, enjoy whatever sunshine you can, and look forward to seeing you soon.

Best wishes,  
Andrew Last  
Chair, Parkinson's UK Reading Branch

### **For Wokingham residents only:**

Wokingham Council Health and Wellbeing Centre. Classes are held at Lodden Valley, Bulmershe and Wokingham sports centres.

Supervised gym sessions for those affected by long-term health issues plus weekly PD-specific classes. Qualified instructors. Click on the following link to find out more.

[Activities for health conditions](#)

£3.50 per 55min session.



## Dates for your Diary

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### MARCH 2025

**Friday March 14<sup>th</sup> 10.30am to 12.00pm**

Wokingham Café at the Bradbury Centre, Rose Street, Wokingham RG40 1XS

**Friday March 28<sup>th</sup> from 2.00pm to 4.00pm**

Tilehurst Café in the Youth Hall at the Tilehurst Methodist Church RG31 5AN

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### APRIL 2025

**Wednesday April 2<sup>nd</sup> 2.15pm to 4.00pm**

Branch meeting at Our Lady of Peace Church, 338 Wokingham Road, Earley RG6 7DA

**Pain – what is it, and what can be done about it. Steve Allen, ex-head of RBH Pain Clinic**

**Wednesday April 9<sup>th</sup>: Carers Meeting – details to follow.**

**Friday April 11<sup>th</sup> -All Day**

We will be hosting a PD awareness table near the main entrance of the hospital.

**Friday April 11<sup>th</sup> 10.30am to 12.00pm**

Wokingham Café at the Bradbury Centre, Rose Street, Wokingham RG40 1XS

**Friday April 25<sup>th</sup> from 2.00pm to 4.00pm**

Tilehurst Café in the Youth Hall at the Tilehurst Methodist Church RG31 5AN

**Saturday April 26<sup>th</sup> from 10.30am to 12.00pm**

Whitchurch Art Café at The Old Rectory Stables RG8 7DF

Tea, Coffee, Delicious Cakes and artwork sold on behalf of the Reading Branch

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### MAY 2025

**Wednesday May 7<sup>th</sup> from 2.15pm to 4.00pm**

Branch Meeting at Our Lady of Peace Church, 338 Wokingham Road, Earley RG6 7DA

**Dead Sea Saltwater Therapy, Ginny Mancey, Nirvana Health Manager**

**Friday May 9<sup>th</sup> 10.30am to 12.00pm**

Wokingham Café at the Bradbury Centre, Rose Street, Wokingham RG40 1XS

**Saturday May 10<sup>th</sup> all day**

Bucket collection at Waitrose, Oxford Road. **Please book your 1-hour shift with Kryz**

**Friday May 23<sup>rd</sup> from 2.00pm to 4.00pm**

Tilehurst Café in the Youth Hall at the Tilehurst Methodist Church RG31 5AN

## Activities organised and supported by the Reading Branch of Parkinson

*For more information contact the named Committee lead at [therapies@parkinsonsreading.uk.org](mailto:therapies@parkinsonsreading.uk.org)*

<b>Hydrotherapy</b>	Park House Spa 57 Honey End Lane, Southcote RG30 4EL	Hydrotherapy is held on Mondays from 2.30pm to 3.30pm inc. changing time. £10.00 per session. Exclusively for our members <b>See Page 5 for more information</b>
<b>Pilates</b>	Our Lady of Peace, Earley, Reading RG6 7DA	Every Wednesday 12.45pm to 1.45pm; £5.00 per session - contact David Aaby at <a href="mailto:therapies@parkinsonsreading.org.uk">therapies@parkinsonsreading.org.uk</a>
<b>Ballroom Dancing</b>		No longer available
<b>“BEAT Parkinson’s!” group drumming sessions</b>	Stoneham Court, 100 Cockney Hill, Tilehurst, Reading RG30 4EZ	Fortnightly group Samba drumming, every other Thursday from 11am to 12:15pm. No experience required, instruments provided, partners welcome, good fun guaranteed! Contact <b>Andrew Last</b> at <a href="mailto:chair@parkinsonsreading.org.uk">chair@parkinsonsreading.org.uk</a>
<b>“Boxercise” – Boxing Exercise for Parkinson’s</b>	Mapledurham Pavilion, off Woodcote Road, Caversham RG4 7EZ	Fortnightly classes on alternate Wednesdays from 16:00 – 16:45. If interested contact Colette Wood at <a href="mailto:therapies@parkinsonsreading.org.uk">therapies@parkinsonsreading.org.uk</a> <b>See Page 7 for more information</b>
<b>“Express Yourself” – Speech and Communications</b>	Beansheaf Community Centre, Calcot, Reading RG31 7AW	Weekly classes focussed on improving communication skills for people with Parkinson’s on Wednesday mornings, 9:45 am to 11:15 am. If interested contact <b>Belinda Beakhouse</b> at <a href="mailto:belindabeakhouseSLT@outlook.com">belindabeakhouseSLT@outlook.com</a> or <b>Andrew Last</b> at <a href="mailto:chair@parkinsonsreading.org.uk">chair@parkinsonsreading.org.uk</a>
<b>Singing for Parkinson’s</b>	Stoneham Court, 100 Cockney Hill, Tilehurst, Reading RG30 4EZ	Every two weeks from March 13 <sup>th</sup> from 2.00pm to 3.00pm. <b>See Page 6 for more information</b>

## Activities organised without Reading Branch involvement – for details contact provider

<b>Boxercise Classes</b>	Wokingham Leisure Centre, Wellington Road, Wokingham RG40 2AF	Delivered by Places Leisure ( <a href="http://www.placesleisure.org">www.placesleisure.org</a> ) Every Tuesday from 1.15pm to 2.00pm at Wokingham Leisure Centre. Tel. 0118 977 0007 <b>See Page 7 for more information</b>
<b>Hydrotherapy - Dead Sea Saltwater Pool</b>	Nirvana Spa, Mole Road, Wokingham RG41 5DJ	Delivered by Nirvana Spa. Times to suit your individual needs. <b>See Page 5 for more information.</b>
<b>Walking Football</b>	1.30pm, every Tuesday at Bracknell Leisure Centre	Delivered by Callum Salhotra at <a href="mailto:callum.salhotra@berksbucksfa.com">callum.salhotra@berksbucksfa.com</a> or phone 07399 249038
<b>Nordic Walking</b>	Thameside Promenade Car Park, RG1 8BD	Delivered by Derek Holloway. Every Thursday 3.00pm to 4.00pm Pease contact <b>Derek Holloway</b> on 07843 584 900 or <a href="mailto:derekholloway1@gmail.com">derekholloway1@gmail.com</a> No experience needed. Poles available for loan

Parkinson’s UK is the operating name of the Parkinson’s Disease Society of the United Kingdom. A charity registered in England and Wales (258197) and in Scotland (SC037554)

At the February branch meeting Ian Grant from the charity Medical Detection Dogs provided us with a fascinating insight into how dogs detect various conditions, including PD, using their acute sense of smell. The charity is actively working on a project to help improve the diagnosis of PD.



At the January branch meeting we received an update from Nayia Argyrou on a vibrational cueing device for the legs and we also heard from John Pettigrew, Senior Project Manager, Parkinson's UK, about the new PUK "Tech Guide".

## Hydrotherapy Options

Have you thought about trying hydrotherapy? – we have two different therapies available:

**Nirvana Spa** have a Dead Sea Salt Therapy Pool which can be accessed by members and non-members. The spa requires that you book a guided one to one session which costs £20 with their Fitness Coach, who will discuss medical history and then guide you through some gentle movements in the warm water. The coach will then email the exercises they recommend for you which you can then use for subsequent sessions.

Following the guided session, you are offered a tailored Relief, Recovery, and Rehabilitation course, which is 10 x 30 min self-directed sessions for £135. The sessions grant exclusive access to Dead Sea Salt Therapy pool and changing facilities only but do not provide entry to other spa facilities.

If the course isn't for you, Nirvana Spare offer single self-directed 30min sessions for £15.00 after attending the guided session. For more information see <https://nirvanacollection.co.uk/health/non-member-offering/> or contact [therapies@parkinsonsreading.org.uk](mailto:therapies@parkinsonsreading.org.uk) or [ginny.mancey@nirvanaspa.co.uk](mailto:ginny.mancey@nirvanaspa.co.uk)

**Park House Spa** run weekly hydrotherapy classes exclusively for our members. The classes are held on Mondays from 2.30 - 3.30. Fees are £10.00 per session and led by a dedicated physiotherapist. Hydrotherapy progresses rehabilitation, addressing all aspects of muscle strengthening, core stability and range of movement, without the normal pressure of gravity. Park House Spa have a state-of-the-art Hydrotherapy pool which is set in a self-contained building comprising of shower and changing facilities. For more information see <https://www.parkhousespa.co.uk/> or contact [therapies@parkinsonsreading.org.uk](mailto:therapies@parkinsonsreading.org.uk)

## Focus on Singing Therapy

### New Fortnightly Singing Classes now started March 13<sup>th</sup>

Yes, singing is back, led by Bimbi Shaw-Cotterill, on alternate Thursday afternoons! Sessions will be at the Berkshire Music Trust in Tilehurst. We expect it to be a mixture of vocal warm-ups, singing technique and belting out some old favourites! No prior singing experience needed. Tea and biscuits included.

**Where:** Berkshire Music Trust, Stoneham Court, 100 Cockney Hill, Tilehurst, Reading RG30 4EZ  
**When:** Next sessions Thursday 13th March, 27th March, April 10th; later dates to be confirmed.  
**Cost:** £5 per session, first session free.  
**Phone:** David Adby on 0118 926 7348  
**Email:** [therapies@parkinsonsreading.org.uk](mailto:therapies@parkinsonsreading.org.uk) for the attention of David.  
Contact: Andrew Last on 07813 193038 or [chair@parkinsonsreading.org.uk](mailto:chair@parkinsonsreading.org.uk)

## Neuro Physiotherapy Options

Here is a summary of the neuro-physio sessions organised by the Reading Branch - select the class most suitable for your individual needs.

### Movement and Balance Exercise

Home-based exercise via Zoom, Thursdays from 12.45pm to 1.30pm. Session led by Sarah Papworth. Exercise from the comfort of your home or anywhere that has an internet connection. Feel free to Contact Sarah directly to find out more on **07775 647054**. £5.00 per session.

**Zoom meeting ID: 859 771 2511 / Password: nD42pD.**

### Medium intensity classes in Wokingham

Led by Kelly Dodds, at Bradbury Centre, Rose Street, Wokingham RG40 1XS

Every Tuesday 10.30am to 11.15am

Every Thursday 1.00pm to 1.45pm

£7.00 per session

Email [therapies@parkinsonsreading.org.uk](mailto:therapies@parkinsonsreading.org.uk) to find out more about the Wokingham classes

### Medium/high intensity classes in Caversham

Led by Sarah Mindham. PD-specific exercises at a medium/high intensity.

At Mapledurham Pavilion, signposted off the Woodcote Road, Caversham RG4 7EZ

Every Monday 2.30pm to 3.30pm, including PD-Warrior style exercises

Every Wednesday 3.00pm to 4.00pm, including circuits and PD-Warrior style exercises.

First session is free - £30 per month for one class per week

Email [PDExercise@hotmail.com](mailto:PDExercise@hotmail.com) to find out more about the Caversham classes



## New Boxercise Classes

There is increasing evidence to support that exercise is important for people with Parkinson's Disease. Boxercise is group exercise class that combines cardio and resistance training with exercises that are adapted from the world of boxing that emphasize agility, speed, accuracy and hand-eye coordination.

Two new boxercise classes have been set up, suitable for all fitness levels, with a qualified Boxercise instructor who has a specialist knowledge of Parkinson's. The exercises are developed to help address Parkinson's symptoms such as tremor, poor balance, posture issues and a loss of strength while increasing overall fitness levels. The details for the two classes are as follows:

### **Weekly: Hosted by Places Leisure**

- Every Tuesday from 1.15 -2pm at Wokingham Leisure Centre Wellington Road, Wokingham,
- RG40 2AF.
- Hosted by Places Leisure – Places Leisure members: Free; Non-members (including Parkinson's UK Reading Branch members): £3.50
- Booking is recommended to secure a space. Bookings can be made via the Places Leisure
- website – [www.placesleisure.org](http://www.placesleisure.org)

### **Fortnightly: Hosted by the Reading Branch**

- Alternate Wednesdays from 4.00-4:45pm at Mapledurham Pavilion, Woodcote Road,
- Caversham RG4 7EZ starting on Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> February
- Cost £5 per session
- For more information about the classes please contact - [therapies@parkinsonsreading.org.uk](mailto:therapies@parkinsonsreading.org.uk)

## **AbilityNet**

[www.abiitynet.org.uk](http://www.abiitynet.org.uk)

Established in 1998 AbilityNet is a pioneering UK charity transforming the lives of older and disabled people and working with organisations of all types and sizes to build a digital world that is accessible to all. We support a wide range of users; from older or disabled people looking for help with their technology to digital professionals advocating for accessibility and inclusion best practices within their organisation.

Follow the link above to see an interesting look at Smartphone tips.

## Reading Male Voice Choir Concert

The figure raised through the RMVC on February 8<sup>th</sup> was a tremendous **£1708.41** including the raffle. This event is one of the biggest fund raisers of the year for the Reading Branch and we've already booked the choir for 2026! The evening was so successful due to every single person who helped before, during and after the event. Firstly, I would like to thank the three RMVC wives who manned the "box office" and did a sterling job.

Thanks to the team who distributed flyers in the locality of Christchurch on two separate weekends prior to the concert with Pauline and Rob Needham posting 420 flyers on their own through letter boxes whilst going on their walks! A big thank you goes to Sharon, David and Richard for selling tickets and to Pauline, Rob, Lynda, Sheila, Sharon, David and Andrew for the flyer drops.

During the interval there were bottled drinks, donated by Share, and we were all able to sample the sweet delights hand baked by Linda Bexell (Parkinson's UK). Linda single handedly baked so many goodies we were giving them away as everyone was leaving. A huge cheer for Sue, Jean, Patricia (RMVC wives). Joan and Linda who raised **£471** on the raffle Finally, thanks go to the all-important team consisting of Sharon, Penny and Cherril for the refreshments and for helping wherever it was needed e.g. setting up and clearing up at the end.

And we would like to acknowledge thank and you, Krys your kind words and for making the whole event possible!

## Please Support Iona

I am running the London Marathon on 27<sup>th</sup> April 2025 in support of Parkinson's UK, a charity that has been a great help to my mum in recent years, and I would like to represent as many people living with Parkinson's in the UK as possible by wearing their names on my clothing while I run.

I also work as a domiciliary care worker in my local community and care for several people with Parkinson's. My idea was to put their names on my back whilst I run. With their permission, that would give me six names on my back. Then my brain thought, why stop there? **Why not see how many people I can represent living with Parkinson's in the UK?**

This is an opportunity to convey just how many people are living with PD in the UK.

If you would like Iona to wear your name – it could be a pseudonym or nickname – then email Nigel at [secretary@parkinsonsreading.org.uk](mailto:secretary@parkinsonsreading.org.uk) and I will forward them on.

My name is Iona Rayner, and I am emailing you because I have had a bit of a crazy idea of something I want to try do for people living with Parkinson's in the UK and I am hoping you can help me with it.





## LIVE to THRIVE - Pangbourne Art Therapy Group

Tuesday afternoon 1.30pm -3.30pm Pangbourne Village Hall

ART is fun and, if you are finding things difficult it can really help **Why not give it a try?**

We are a happy group who enjoy exploring different and varied art techniques. We have a good time, and we certainly laugh a lot! We also benefit from support from each other in sessions when difficult emotions surface and it all gets too much. We are not great talents, but our lovely professional artist is always introducing new projects and guiding us to get the best out of ourselves.

The cost is £40 per adult for 4 weeks, paid in advance (or £15 a session, paid on the day)  
Materials and refreshments are included.

If you would like to join or find out more about the group, drop us an email at  
[pangbourne.art.therapy@gmail.com](mailto:pangbourne.art.therapy@gmail.com)

## Annual General Meeting

The Reading Branch AGM was held on Wednesday March. PUK was represented by David Newbold and Zoe Sole. The minutes of the 2024 AGM were approved and the officer's reports adopted.

All existing committee members were prepared to remain in post for another year and were duly elected. In addition, we are delighted to welcome three new committee members for 2025: Rod Whetten, Mark Watkins and Elaine Elliman

## The 2025 committee members are:

<b>Andrew Last:</b> Chair and event organiser	<a href="mailto:chair@parkinsonsreading.org.uk">chair@parkinsonsreading.org.uk</a>	07813 193038
<b>Geoff Gee:</b> Vice chair and Membership	<a href="mailto:membership@parkinsonsreading.org.uk">membership@parkinsonsreading.org.uk</a>	07713 590636
<b>Alison Gee:</b> Treasurer	<a href="mailto:treasurer@parkinsonsreading.org.uk">treasurer@parkinsonsreading.org.uk</a>	07421 739575
<b>Nigel Crabb:</b> Secretary	<a href="mailto:secretary@parkinsonsreading.org.uk">secretary@parkinsonsreading.org.uk</a>	07810 554650
<b>Penny Inglis:</b> Social	<a href="mailto:social@parkinsonsreading.org.uk">social@parkinsonsreading.org.uk</a>	07757 662925
<b>Krys Lewis:</b> Fundraising	<a href="mailto:fundraising@parkinsonsreading.org.uk">fundraising@parkinsonsreading.org.uk</a>	07787 511447
<b>David Adby:</b> Therapies	<a href="mailto:therapies@parkinsonsreading.org.uk">therapies@parkinsonsreading.org.uk</a>	07806 456480
<b>Ricky Duveen:</b> Therapies	<a href="mailto:therapies@parkinsonsreading.org.uk">therapies@parkinsonsreading.org.uk</a>	0118 961 4027
<b>Colette Wood:</b> Therapies	<a href="mailto:therapies@parkinsonsreading.org.uk">therapies@parkinsonsreading.org.uk</a>	07766 224669
<b>Zoe Crabb:</b> Minutes Secretary	<a href="mailto:minutes@parkinsonsreading.org.uk">minutes@parkinsonsreading.org.uk</a>	07709 087854
<b>Mark Watkins</b> Committee Member:		
<b>Elaine Elliman</b> Committee Member:		
<b>Rod Whetten</b> Committee Member		

## Meet our new Committee Members



### Elaine Elliman

I was born in London, went to Newcastle University to study Spanish & Latin American studies.

I moved to Reading when I got married to Mick. We have 2 daughters. Since retiring from a teaching career, I have learnt to play Golf and Bridge and have worked with Reading Lions for 12 years, carrying out many types of Charity and Fundraising work.

My husband was diagnosed with PD 5 years ago.

### Mark Watkins

I have lived in many countries throughout the world over the course of my career and have now returned permanently to the UK with my two daughters. I have always believed in giving back and for the last few years until I left Chile, I was the Chairman of the Royal British Legion. Now, I find myself in the UK and looking for a way to help. My partner, Joanne, was diagnosed with Parkinson's about 7 years ago, thus Parkinson's UK is a cause I would like to be part of, and Reading is the nearest branch to me. I'm willing, I have time. I'm IT literate and fair at DIY. I'm completely happy to help in whatever way I can. Do feel free to ask if you need something.



### Rod Whettem

Age 68, diagnosed with Parkinson's in August 2023. Married and live in Whitley.

Now retired after a career with British Telecom and Hewlett-Packard as an IT manager. I try to keep fit by walking 3 to 4 miles a day and attending Boxercise and Pilates classes once a week. My interests include Genealogy and 60's & 70's rock music.