

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 22

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. www.parkinsonsreading.org.uk

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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

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 reported below, we were delighted that Paul Mayhew-Archer's performance at the Wokingham Theatre on June 27th was such a great success. The sold-out evening was memorable in several ways, not least in bringing together "Parkies" from a wide geographical area to share the frustrations of our situations with so much humour. The Theatre provided a perfect setting, especially with the warm temperatures outside contrasting with the "just right" inside.

The show made a wonderful contribution to our funds, thanks to the generosity of the Wokingham Theatre Trust, who provided use of their lovely venue without charge, and Paul's refusal to accept any payment for his performance.

The addition to our funds will enable us to do even more to support the local Parkinson's community. Currently, most of what we do relates to activities, therapies and social events, but we are very aware that many members struggle with issues that may need more than exercise classes, such as one-to-one counselling. For that reason, we are pleased to be exploring with the "Parkinsons.me" charity how we can access their signposting service to personal support.

We would welcome other ideas about how the Branch could do more to help members improve their quality of life. The social element of our meetings makes a big contribution to this through the opportunities they provide to informally share hints and tips about living with Parkinson's. Our August meeting is intended to focus exactly on that – a semi social meeting, with no outside speaker, but a chance to sit round tables exchanging experiences and ideas. Anecdotes may not be as funny as Paul Mayhew-Archer's, but helping others benefit from things that we have learned the hard way can be equally rewarding. And you never know, we might find our very own stand-up comedian amongst our own members!

Keep well, as best you can, and very best wishes.
Andrew Last, Chair, Parkinson's UK Reading Branch

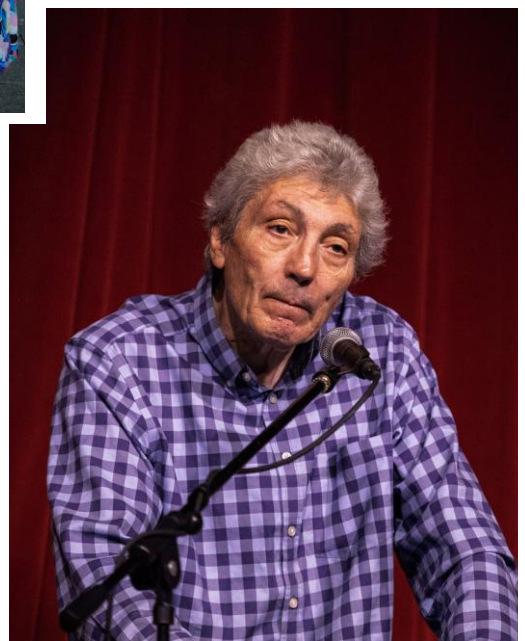
An Evening with Paul Mayhew-Archer

Paul Mayhew-Archer, of Vicar of Dibley and Movers and Shakers fame, came to Wokingham on June 27th with his one man show Incurable Optimist. On a lovely summer evening, Wokingham Theatre was full to hear him. Feedback from the audience included

"Quite inspirational as well as being very funny"
"A happy, relaxed and well organised evening"
"It was good to have a laugh in a lovely venue too"
"A wonderful evening and a much needed laugh"

On top of that, our friends at the theatre did not charge us anything and took care of the tech side of things (and the bar!). As a result, as well as having a pleasant and smoothly running event, we raised **£2700** for branch funds. Many thanks to everyone involved for their support. – Geoff Gee

Photos courtesy of Hope Lawrence Images



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)

Dates for your Diary

JULY 2025

Wednesday July 9th from 1.30pm to 3.30pm

Carer's Meeting at the Radstock Community Centre, Radstock Lane, Earley RG6 5UL

Friday July 11th from 10.30am to 12.00pm

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

Thursday July 17th from 7.00pm to 8.30pm

Working Age Group meeting at the Waterside Pub, Fairwater Drive, Woodley RG5 3EZ

Friday July 25th from 2.00pm to 4.00pm

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

Friday July 25th and Saturday July 26th – all day

Bucket collection at Waitrose, Wokingham. **Please contact Krysl Lewis if you can help on either day.**

AUGUST 2025

Wednesday August 6th from 2.15pm to 4.00pm

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

Hints and Tips for Living with Parkinson's; Sharing of experiences, problems and fixes

Semi-social, member-led discussion

Friday August 8th 10.30am to 12.00pm

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

Friday August 22nd from 2.00pm to 4.00pm

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

Saturday August 30th – all day

Bucket collection at IKEA, Reading – **please contact Krysl Lewis if you can help on the day.**

SEPTEMBER 2025

Wednesday September 3rd from 2.00pm to 4.00pm

Afternoon Tea at Riseley Village Tea Rooms – **See below for more information**

NOTE: This replaces the September branch meeting

Friday September 12th 10.30am to 12.00pm

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

Friday September 26th 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's UK

For more information contact the named Committee lead at therapies@parkinsonsreading.uk.org

Hydrotherapy (RBA01)	Park House Spa, 57 Honey End Lane, Southcote, Reading, RG30 4EL	Dedicated hydrotherapy sessions with a qualified physiotherapist held for our members. (1 hour session includes access to the changing facilities before and after the session) 14:30 to 15:30 Every Monday David Adby 01189 267 348
Pilates (RBA02)	Our Lady of Peace, Earley, Reading RG6 7DA	Pilates is beneficial for people with PD, helping to improve core strength, flexibility, balance and coordination. The low impact-controlled movement of Pilates can help in addressing some of the movement difficulties associated with PD such as stiffness and slowness. 12:45 to 13:45 Every Wednesday Colette Wood 07766 224669
BEAT Parkinsons! Group drumming (RBA04)	Berkshire Music Trust, Stoneham Court, 100 Cockney Hill, Tilehurst, Reading, RG30 4EZ	Playing Latin rhythms to improve motor control, multi-tasking, limb co-ordination and independence. No experience needed, instruments provided, and great fun. Partners welcome. 11:00 to 12:15 Every other Thursday (fortnightly) Andrew Last 07813 193038
Singing for Parkinsons (RBA03)	Berkshire Music Trust, Stoneham Court, 100 Cockney Hill, Tilehurst, Reading, RG30 4EZ	Led by Bimbi Shaw-Cotterill, a mixture of vocal warm-ups, singing technique and belting out some old favourites! No prior singing experience needed. Tea and biscuits included. 14:00 to 15:00 Every other Thursday (fortnightly) Andrew Last 07813 193038
Movement and Balance (RBA05)	On-line via Zoom	Exercise from the comfort of your home or anywhere that has an internet connection. Movement and Balance exercise class including some chair-based exercises. 12:45 to 13:30 Every Thursday Nigel Crabb 07810 554650
Wokingham Tuesday Physio (RBA06)	Bradbury Centre, Rose Street, Wokingham, RG40 1XS	Classes cover a combination of aerobic, strength, and mobility exercises, with a gentle warm up and cool down at the end. Seated options are available. Classes vary by week to focus on different topics e.g. balance, co-ordination etc. with a mixture of PD-specific, PD warrior style exercises. 10:30 to 11:15 Every Tuesday David Adby 01189 267 348
Wokingham Thursday Physio (RBA07)	Bradbury Centre, Rose Street, Wokingham, RG40 1XS	Classes cover a combination of aerobic, strength, and mobility exercises, with a gentle warm up and cool down at the end. Seated options are available. Classes vary by week to focus on different topics e.g. balance, co-ordination etc. with a mixture of PD-specific, PD warrior style exercises. 10:30 to 11:15 Every Thursday David Adby 01189 267 348
Caversham Monday Physio (RBA08)	Mapledurham Pavilion, off Woodcote Road, Caversham, Reading, RG4 7EZ	Classes cover a combination of aerobic, strength, and mobility exercises which vary by week to focus on different topics e.g. balance, co-ordination etc. Includes a mixture of PD specific PD warrior style exercises and some circuits. Classes are led by a specialist neuro-physiotherapist. 14:30 to 15:30 Every Monday; Colette Wood 07766 224669

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Caversham Wednesday Physio (RBA09)	Mapledurham Pavilion, off Woodcote Road, Caversham, Reading, RG4 7EZ	Classes cover a combination of aerobic, strength, and mobility exercises which vary by week to focus on different topics e.g. balance, co-ordination etc. Includes a mixture of PD specific PD warrior style exercises and some circuits. Classes are led by a specialist neuro-physiotherapist. 14:30 to 15:30 Every Monday Colette Wood 07766 224669
Express Yourself Speech and Communication (RBA10)	Radstock Community Centre, Radstock Lane, Earley, RG6 5UL	Classes focused on improving communication skills for people with Parkinson's through voice training and role play. 2.15 to 3.45 Every other Wednesday Run in block of six sessions Andrew Last 07813 193038
Caversham Boxercise Boxing Exercise (RBA11)	Mapledurham Pavilion, off Woodcote Road, Caversham, Reading, RG4 7EZ	Led by a qualified boxercise instructor with experience of PD. Parkinson's boxercise uses the principles of boxing to improve strength, balance and co-ordination for people with PD. It is a non-contact workout meaning it does not involve fighting another person and focuses on movements that mimic boxing techniques like punching and footwork. 16:00 to 16:45 2nd and 4th Wednesday every month Colette Wood 07766 224669
Activities organised without Reading Branch involvement – for details contact provider		
Wokingham Boxercise Boxing Exercise (Comm2)	Wokingham Leisure Centre, Wellington Road, Wokingham RG40 2AF	Led by a qualified boxercise instructor with experience of PD. Parkinson's boxercise incorporates boxing based movements to improve strength, balance and coordination for people with PD. Class must be booked in advance via https://www.placesleisure.org/centres/wokingham-leisure-centre/centre-activities/fitness-health/#timetable 13:15 to 14:00 Every Tuesday
Bracknell Neuro Walking Football (BR01)	Bracknell Leisure Centre, Bagshot Road, Bracknell, RG12 9SE	The Berks and Bucks Association run a walking football session aimed at people with neurological conditions, including Parkinson's 13:30 to 15:30 Every Tuesday Callum Salhotra 07399 249038
Hydrotherapy - Dead Sea Salt Water Pool (Comm1)	Nirvana Spa, Mole Road, Sindlesham, Wokingham, RG41 5DJ	Branch members can book access to the Dead Sea Salt Therapy pool. Sessions can only be booked after a one-to-one session has been completed with a dedicated Spa fitness coach. The initial one-to-one session with the fitness coach costs £20. Subsequent sessions - either a rehabilitation course at 10 x 30 minutes is £135 or individual self-directed sessions at £15 per session. Times to suit but must be booked in advance with the Spa As required on an individual basis Ginny Mancey 0118 9897500
Nordic Walking (Ind1)	Tesco, Napier Road, RG1 8DF	Nordic Walking helps with gait, balance, stride length posture. Instructor will provide coaching on technique. The walk is around 2 miles by the river with optional tea and coffee afterwards. 14:45 for 15:00 start to 16:00 Every Thursday - Walk may be cancelled due to adverse weather conditions. Colette Wood 07766 224669

Move and Shout (Comm3)	Wokingham Leisure Centre, Wellington Road, Wokingham, RG40 2AF	The Move and Shout Programme offers the chance to try a range of different group exercise classes over a 12-week period, led by a qualified instructor with knowledge of PD. Classes will include boxercise, circuits, gym-based sessions, seated exercise, group cycling and will vary by week. 12:00 to 13:00 Every Monday from 30th June until 15 th September Molly Hale 07736 132804
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Hear.me

Parkinsons.me is an independent charity based in South Oxfordshire. They have a community garden near Wantage, and run group exercise classes, including one in Mapledurham, just north of Reading.

They aim to help support people with PD as well as carers and family members. As part of this they have a scheme called Hear.Me, which is for people who would benefit from counselling to help deal with issues arising from having a person with PD in the family. It is their policy to pay for the counselling, and we have agreed to contribute to the costs for any of our members who want to take advantage of this service. <https://www.parkinsons.me/hearme>

Penny Ayre, who is a trustee of Parkinsons.Me and runs the Hear.Me scheme will be our guest speaker at the November 5th branch meeting. If you think you could benefit from Hear.Me, you can contact them directly, at hearme@parkinsons.me, or for more information email: membership@parkinsonsreading.org.uk

Geoff Gee

Fundraising Update

Your help would be appreciated for two forthcoming fund-raising events:

Friday 25th & Saturday 26th July

Bucket collection at Waitrose, Wokingham

Saturday 30th August

Bucket collection at IKEA, Reading

To book a 1-hour timeslot, please contact Krys Lewis at fundraising@parkinsonsreading.org.uk

Thank you!



Update on Izzy's Skydive

Izzy is in her final year at Reading University and doing her dissertation on Parkinson's and how it effects language.

Izzy completed a skydive on June 1st raising a fabulous £560 for Parkinson's UK.

Thank you to everyone who sponsored her.



Afternoon Tea

Afternoon Tea

Wednesday 3rd September

The Reading branch of Parkinson's UK invites you to join us for Afternoon Tea from 2.00pm - 4.00pm on Wednesday 3rd September at Riseley Village Tea Rooms, RG7 1SD

£15.00 per person (person with PD plus a maximum of one carer or partner)

Only 50 places so book now!

How to book – Step 1

Pay £15 per person by bank transfer:

Parkinsons Disease Society of the UK
Sort Code 20-00-00 Account: 43353958
With reference "Afternoon Tea"

How to book – Step 2

Email Penny at social@parkinsonsreading.org.uk to secure your place and advise of any dietary requirements

Why not visit West Green House and Garden near Hook beforehand?

Remembering Briony Cooke

Briony's funeral will take place at St Thomas's Church, Goring-on-Thames on Monday July 21st at 2.00pm.

Please let me know if you will be attending.

SURVIVING AND THRIVING WITH PARKINSON'S



A practical guide to living well,
from a 20-year Parkinson's survivor

Briony Cooke

"Parkinson's Disease was a route I didn't choose, but a journey I had to make; there was no backing out. But I began to realise that there was a choice about how I would travel."

It was with great sadness that I learned of Briony's sudden passing on June 2nd. Our sympathies go out to Briony's husband, Henry, and her whole family.

Briony was a wife, mother and grandmother. She loved teaching and was subject leader for geography and environmental science in a tertiary college as well as senior tutor to 250 pre-university students. Unfortunately, the demands of the job forced her to take early retirement from the college in 2006 having been diagnosed with PD in 2000.

For the next two years she continued as Deputy Chief Examiner for geography with the International Baccalaureate and travelled widely in that role. After that, Briony co-authored five geography textbooks.

In 2007 Briony co-founded the PEPs support group for young-onset, self-declared *"Positively Enthusiastic Parkies"*. This is when I first met Briony and connected with her positive outlook which shaped my how I dealt with PD.

From humble beginnings, meeting in Briony's sitting room, PEPs grew and moved to larger, central Reading locations. Her positive outlook set the tone for PEPs and the group attracted 40+ members (often young-onset, newly diagnosed and working age PwP) as well as several high-profile speakers including Tom Isaacs, Paul-Mayhew Archer and consultants from the RBH.

In 2018 Briony wrote a book based on living and thriving with PD which I thoroughly recommend whatever stage you are at with your PD.

We saw less of Briony after she moved to Goring and in 2020, after the COVID pandemic, PEPs became part of the Reading Branch, and I'm pleased to see its work continuing through ongoing branch initiatives.

Nigel Crabb