

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

www.parkinsonsreading.org.uk

As a local support group, our purpose is to offer friendship and support to anyone affected by Parkinson's in the Reading & District 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.

Welcome to this edition of the PUK Reading Branch Newsletter. 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.

Edition 23 (v22)

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Reading 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 explained on Page 3, I am stepping down from my role as Chair from the end of September, and what you are reading will be my last “From the Chair” for the foreseeable future! Looking back on previous Newsletters, the Branch certainly seems to have been very busy, and this edition is full of news, activities and, as ever, successful fund raising.

However, I know from personal experience that having lots of things going on can come at the price of a heavy workload for the Committee. And there is much that we would like to do for which we do not have the time and energy to organise.

Fortunately, there are many organisations in the area that provide services or activities that may be relevant to the Parkinson’s community. For example, Hear.Me based in South Oxfordshire (and featured in the last Newsletter) offers several facilities for PwPs, including a service that provides signposting to counselling support. And the Move and Shout programme run by Places Leisure with support from Wokingham Council and PUK, offers the chance to try out a wide range of exercise types as part of a 12-week block of sessions. These are facilities that the Branch is very happy to bring to your attention, and potentially we might contribute to financially, so long as it doesn’t add too much to the Branch workload.

However, there are lots of “providers” out there, mostly operating on some sort of commercial basis, and serving widely varying geographical catchment areas. It is difficult to keep track of what is on offer, what is accessible, and to judge the quality of what is delivered. This is where you can help, by sharing knowledge and experience of services that are potentially useful and helping promote them to the wider Parkinson’s community. Let us know of things that you have found relevant, and we – possibly with you – can help spread the word.

As you read this, we will be heading into the late summer, and Christmas will be on the horizon! So, in the meantime, enjoy every moment, stay active, and I hope to see you soon.

With best wishes

Andrew Last, Chair, Parkinson’s UK Reading branch

Berkshire Working Age Group

A casual meeting for working age people with PD and their partners. Everyone is welcome and we look forward to seeing you. Next meeting is on September 18th – see “Dates for your Diary” below.

For more information, please contact Katy Slade at kslade@parkinsons.org.uk or 0334 2253750

Changes to Committee Arrangements

A few weeks ago, I wrote to members to advise them that I was standing down from my role as Chair of the Branch with effect from the end of September. This change is a bit sooner than I had anticipated, and reflects worsening of my PD symptoms, which means I am no longer able to perform my role as well as I would like.

Fortunately, the Committee remains energetic and enthusiastic, and Geoff Gee, the Vice Chair, is willing to step forward to become Acting Chair, for which I am very grateful. Some other shuffling of Committee responsibilities is taking place to get more evenly balanced workloads. Zoe and Nigel are taking on Membership Secretary duties, and Colette will become Minutes Secretary. I intend to remain on the Committee until at least the next AGM, in March 2026.

We hope that these changes will help ensure the Committee continues to function effectively in the interests of the Branch's members. But my stepping down from the Chair will reduce the resources available to the Committee and makes even more welcome any offers of help with running the Branch. This could be at any level of commitment, whether that is help with meetings, or assistance with running activities, groups, or potentially full-scale Committee membership. Please get in touch with me or any other Committee members if you have questions or would like to contribute more to the Branch.

Andrew Last
Chair, Parkinson's UK Reading branch

Group drumming and singing to resume!

After a very frustrating hiatus, I am glad to say that **BOTH** drumming and singing will be resuming in September.

Beat Parkinson's! our popular group drumming sessions get back to business on Thursday 18th September followed by a second session a week later on Thursday 25th September and then every two weeks starting 9th October. See page 6 for more information.

Singing for Parkinson's kicks off again at 11am on Thursday 11th September. Further sessions are pencilled in for 2nd October, 16th October and every two weeks thereafter but these later sessions may depend on sufficient attendance on 11th September. If you would like to attend these classes but can't make the 11th of September session, please let me know. Also, get in touch with me if you would like more information about either of these activities.

Andrew Last 07813 193038

Sign the Parky Charter

Join the Movers and Shakers, Parkinson's UK, Spotlight YOPD and Cure Parkinson's to call on the government to take action to improve the lives of people with Parkinson's and their loved ones.

'The Parky Charter' describes 5 things that people with Parkinson's need from the government but are not getting. And we want to bring it to the attention of politicians. The Movers and Shakers launched a new petition in April as a lot has changed since their original petition last year, not least the government. [View the petition on the parliament website.](#)

Get involved with Speech and Language Therapy

Speech and Language Therapy (SLT) is important to many people with Parkinson's because it can help address voice, communication and swallowing problems. The Berkshire Community Adult SLT service is introducing a new form of therapy known as Expiratory Muscle Strength Training (EMST) and is looking for PwPs to trial and provide feedback on proposed procedures.

The therapy uses a spring-loaded device which exercises the muscles involved in speaking and swallowing. The therapy has been shown to generate clinically proven benefits, and involvement in the trial will provide early access to the therapy before it is rolled out more widely.

Participants must live in Berkshire and meet ASLT referral criteria, including a diagnosis of idiopathic PD, and symptoms of swallowing difficulties. You will be asked to use the device for five minutes, five times a day, five days a week, over a five-week period, and will receive regular check-ups and advice from your speech and language therapist.

You must not meet any contraindications to EMST – these are listed here: [Contraindications 3](#). To take part, you need to request a referral to the ASLT service from a healthcare professional such as your GP or Parkinson's Nurse, referencing the EMST trial.

I am involved in the trial as a person with lived experience of Parkinson's, and I am happy to share what I know – Andrew Last.

Other SLT research

We are also aware of two research projects by Reading University SLT students that would welcome participation from the Parkinson's community:

Dr Miriam Huarriz (m.huarrizgurpide@pgr.reading.ac.uk) is exploring how brain activity and tongue movement are impacted by Parkinson's when talking. She is looking for twenty people with Parkinson's, and twenty without, to visit the University for two sessions, involving surveys and completing speech tasks while being monitored by ultrasound and EEG

Sophie Rutter (s.e.rutter@student.reading.ac.uk) is researching Mobile applications for managing speech and language therapy exercises for Parkinson's disease and is looking for participants who will trial a mobile app at home, then participate in a focus group discussion at the University.

Geoff Pratt

Within the last few weeks, we received the sad news of Geoff's passing. Geoff was a long-term member of the Reading branch. Our condolences go out to Geoff's wife, Heather and his family.

Dates for your Diary

SEPTEMBER 2025

Wednesday September 3rd from 2.00pm to 4.00pm

Afternoon Tea at Riseley Village Tea Rooms

NOTE: This replaces the September branch meeting

Friday September 5th 10.30am to 12.00pm

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

NOTE: This is one week earlier than usual

Thursday September 18th from 7pm to 8.30pm

Berkshire Working Age group meeting at The Waterside, Woodley RG5 3EZ

Friday September 26th from 2.00pm to 4.00pm

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

OCTOBER 2025

Wednesday October 1st from 2.15pm to 4.00pm

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

speaker, Steve Allen, ex-head of RBH Pain Clinic Subject: Pain part 2 - Guest

Friday October 10th 10.30am to 12.00pm

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

Friday October 24th from 2.00pm to 4.00pm

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

NOVEMBER 2025

Wednesday November 5th from 2.15pm to 4.00pm

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

Guest speaker, Penny Ayre – Hear.Me at Parkinsons.Me

Friday November 14th 10.30am to 12.00pm

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

Friday November 28th from 2.00pm to 4.00pm

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

DECEMBER 2025

Wednesday December 3rd

Christmas lunch at Sonning Golf Club.

See Page 10 for booking and menu options.

NOTE: This replaces the December branch meeting



Activities organised and supported by the Reading Branch of Parkinson's UK

Before attending any of these classes, please email the named committee lead at therapies@parkinsonsreading.org.uk to identify the best class for you and ensure space is available

Park House 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 & 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 Rod Whettem 07733 554321
BEAT Parkinsons! Group drumming (RBA04) RETURNING SESSION	Berkshire Music Trust, Stoneham Court, 100 Cockney Hill, Tilehurst, Reading, RG30 4EZ	Improve motor control, multi-tasking, limb co-ordination and independence. No experience needed, instruments provided. Partners welcome. 11am to 12.15pm, Thursday 18 th and 25 th September., then 8 th October and fortnightly thereafter. Andrew Last 07813 193038
Singing for Parkinsons (RBA03) RETURNING SESSIION	Berkshire Music Trust, Stoneham Court, 100 Cockney Hill, Tilehurst, Reading, RG30 4EZ	Led by Bimbi Shaw-Cotterill, warm-ups, singing technique and belting out some old favourites! No prior singing experience needed. Tea and biscuits included. First session starts at 11am on Thursday 11 th Sep, then 2 nd October, 16 th October and fortnightly thereafter. 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. 13:00 to 13:45 Every Thursday Colette Wood 07766 224669
Caversham Wednesday Physio (RBA09)	Mapledurham Pavilion, off Woodcote Road, Caversham, Reading,	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

	RG4 7EZ	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 Runs in block of six sessions. Currently paused, dates for next block to be determined. 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 Molly Hale 07736 132804
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 1 (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, 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 Molly Hale - ExerciseReferralWokingham@pfpleisure.org

Move and Shout 2 (Comm4)	Bulmershe Leisure Centre, Woodlands Ave, Woodley, Reading RG5 3EU	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. 11.:40 to 12:40 Every Thursday from 11/09/25 until 27/11/25 Molly Hale - ExerciseReferralWokingham@pfpleisure.org
Medium Intensity Neurophysio class 1 (Ind2)	Mapledurham Pavilion, off Woodcote Road, Caversham, Reading, RG4 7EZ	Sponsored by the Oxfordshire based Parkinsons.Me charity - a Neurophysio class with moderate intensity exercises which will include a combination of aerobic, strength, and mobility exercises, with a gentle warm up and cool down at the end. Classes vary by week to focus on different topics e.g. balance, co-ordination etc A separate room is available for partners/carers to meet and have a cup of tea or coffee and a chat whilst the class is taking place and available after the class for the attendees to join in. 13:30 to 14:15 Every Monday Sarah Mindham 7540134530

Bucket Collection Update

There will be a bucket collection at **IKEA, Reading on Saturday August 30th**. This is the first time we have been granted permission to collect inside the IKEA store, and we are hoping it proves to be as successful as our supermarket collections. Thaks to all those who have offered their help on the day.

Thank you to all involved in the recent 2-day bucket collection at Waitrose in Wokingham we raised an outstanding **£2,237** for the Reading branch.





Fundraising Feature Sarah & Tony Ellis

Tony's Story

Tony is 75 and has been interested in music and collecting records since he was fourteen years old.

He started DJ'ing at the Wheatsheaf, Kings Road, Chelsea in 1970. From this venue Tony then started DJ'ing at Shades of Green in Camberly where he gained a keen interest in soul music. This led to him playing all over the south of England at Northern Soul venues including the 100 Club in Oxford Street. He was big on the all-nighter scene, and this has been an important part of his life ever since.

A short time ago, Tony finally decided to hang up his headphones and his last gig took place in Teddington where, together with Sarah, they raised **£1,120.89** (ticket sales and a bucket collection) for the Parkinson's UK Reading branch.

A huge thank you Sarah and Tony for organising this event and for raising so much money which will go towards providing therapies and events for our members.

READING BRANCH CHRISTMAS LUNCH – BOOK BY NOVEMBER 12th

The Date: Wednesday 3rd December 2025

The Time: 12:30 pm, lunch served at 13:00

The Venue: Sonning Golf Club, Duffield Road, Woodley, RG4 6GJ

The Cost: £21 for each person with Parkinson's and £21 for one partner carer or guest.
Additional guests will be at the full price of £41 per head.

How to Pay: Bank transfer to Parkinsons Disease Society of Great Britain, Sort Code 200000, Bank Account number 43353958, Reference Christmas.

Alternatively, you can pay **cash, cheque or card** at any of the September, October or November branch meetings and café's. – See dates for your diary above.

As soon as you have paid, please choose each person's menu selection from menu below, and send to Penny at social@parkinsonsreading.org.uk. Please indicate any dietary requirements.

Drinks: buy at the bar using card only.

Raffel: Tickets will be on sale (cash or card)

Any queries, please email Penny - social@parkinsonsreading.org.uk or Aliison – treasurer@parkinsons.org.uk





3 Courses @ £41pp

Starters	Mains	Desserts
Celeriac Soup <i>Toasted Hazelnuts (vn) (df) (gf)</i>	Roast Breast of Norfolk Turkey <i>Sage & Onion Stuffing, Honey Glazed Parsnip & Pig in Blanket (df) (gf*)</i>	Individual Christmas Pudding <i>Redcurrants, Brandy Sauce (vn*) (gf*)</i>
Smoked Salmon <i>Beetroot, Yoghurt & Dill Dressing, Micro Herbs (gf)</i>	Slow Roasted Featherblade of Beef <i>Crispy Onions, Spiced Red Cabbage, Rich Red Wine Jus (gf) (df)</i>	Vanilla & Clementine Panna Cotta <i>Ginger Crumb (gf*)</i>
Ham Hock Terrine <i>Apple & Fig Chutney, Chargrilled Crostini (gf*)</i>	Oven Baked Hake <i>Lemon, Tarragon & Cream Sauce, Leek & Potato Cake (gf)</i>	Chocolate & Sour Cherry Roulade <i>Cherry Compote</i>
Roasted Mediterranean Vegetable Tian <i>Mulled Wine Relish & Crumbled Feta (v) (vn*) (gf)</i>	Sweet Potato, Chickpea, Mixed Seed & Lentil Loaf <i>Carrot Puree (gf) (df) (vn)</i>	Fresh Fruit Salad <i>(vn) (gf) (df)</i>

All Main Courses are served with the Chef's Selection of Vegetables & Roast Potatoes, unless otherwise stated

All to include Christmas Novelties, Tea/Coffee & Mince Pies (gf*)
(vn) Vegan / (v) vegetarian / (df) Dairy Free / (gf) Gluten free (gf*) Gluten Free available / (vn*) Vegan available.
Some dishes may contain nuts and alcohol.

Irrespective of your menu choice, please advise any dietary requirements when ordering