

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 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 Parkinson's UK Reading and District 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**.

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Edition v3

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Reading and District Branch Membership Information

The suggested donation for 2025 and for 2026 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.

Reading Male Voice Choir

Once again we are very lucky to have the Reading Male Voice Choir, one of England's premier male voice choirs performing for the Parkinson's Reading Branch with supporting act Vintage Belles on:

Saturday 7th February 2026 at Christchurch, Woodley, RG5 3LA from 7pm.

Tickets are £15.00 each and are available at:

www.rmvc.net or,
www.ticketsource.co.uk/readingmalevoicechoir

Tickets will also be available at the door.

Payment can also be made directly to Parkinsons Disease Society of the UK, Sort Code 20-00-00, Account Number 43353958 using Ref: RMVC and your name.

Please email Krys at k.lewis4@btinternet.com when you make payment to the branch account and she will make sure you receive your tickets at one of our meetings or they can be reserved for you and collected on the door on the evening of the performance.

If anyone has any NEW items such as unwanted gifts that they could donate as raffle prizes for the concert, then please bring them along to any of our meetings or let Krys know to arrange collection.

Update on Express Yourself!

"Express Yourself!" is designed to improve communication skills of people with Parkinson's. It combines speech and language therapy techniques, interactive exercises and pre-scripted mini dramas that allow skills to be practised in a social and fun setting.

The most recent block of the Branch's "Express Yourself!" classes finished just before Christmas, and we are now making plans for further classes to start in February 2026. Please get in touch with me if you are interested in taking part in future sessions, which we will be publicising as soon as we can!

Andrew Last 07813 193038

From the Chair

Our Christmas lunch seems like a long time ago, but once again it was one of the highlights of the year, helped by smooth-running organisation from Penny and the golf club. It was great to see so many of you there: maybe we should do things like that more often? Our March meeting is your chance to say what you would like to see happen.

We ended 2025 on a high note as far as branch funds are concerned. On the Monday before Christmas, Krys organised a highly successful bucket collection at Tesco Wokingham, raising an amazing £1200. We have also had a number of generous donations for which we are incredibly grateful. So, we start 2026 well placed financially, but there is work to do to ensure, this year will continue the trend.

A recently published research paper looked at 'lifestyle interventions' for Parkinson's – that is, things that will help our condition alongside medication. The paper focusses on the role of exercise and physical activity, nutrition and stress. We spend a lot of time talking about exercise and we've touched on nutrition and diet. Perhaps we should do more on this and not just ensure there's enough cake at monthly meetings!

On the subject of dealing with stress, the research paper notes the work that has been carried out looking at the role of mindfulness. At January's monthly meeting, our guest was Emma Bisdee, who spoke about, and led us through some mindfulness exercises. I know some of you struggle with the whole mindfulness approach. But if you think it might be helpful for you, let us know, as Emma has offered to spend more time with us if there is interest.

Geoff Gee

Campaigning for Parkinson's

Our guest at the February 4th branch meeting will be Grace Ogden, Campaigns Engagement Lead at Parkinson's UK. As well as telling us about the current PUK campaigns, Grace is keen to hear about your experiences. In particular we will discuss the **Can't Wait campaign** which lobbies for timely diagnosis (as in the Parky Charter), **access to specialist health staff** and the **NHS workforce plan**.

<https://www.parkinsons.org.uk/get-involved/campaign/our-campaigns>

Reading Branch Progress and Plans

There will be no guest speaker at our March 4th Branch Meeting. Instead, we will get together and discuss what we have been doing over the last year and consider our priorities for 2026. Parkinson's UK have confirmed that we do not need to have a formal AGM, as we have had around this time in previous years, so there will be an opportunity to chat and catch up with other members and to have your say about how the Branch is run.

Zoe Sole and David Newbold from Parkinson's UK will be there to answer questions.

Dates for your Diary

Email reminders will be sent prior to each meeting/event

JANUARY 2026

Friday January 23rd from 2.00pm to 3.45pm

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

FEBRUARY 2026

Wednesday February 4th from 2.15pm to 4.00pm

Branch Meeting at Our Lady of Peace Church, 338 Wokingham Road, Earley RG6 7DA
Grace Ogden, Campaigns Engagement Lead at Parkinson's UK. [See previous page.](#)

Saturday February 7th, 2026

Reading Male Voice Choir Concert at Christchurch, Woodley. RG5 3LA
All proceeds to the Reading and District branch.

Friday February 13th 10.30am to 12.00pm

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

Friday February 27th from 2.00pm to 3.45pm

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

MARCH 2026

Wednesday March 4th from 2.15pm to 4.00pm

Branch Meeting at Our Lady of Peace Church, 338 Wokingham Road, Earley RG6 7DA
Open discussion on Reading Branch progress and plans – [See previous page.](#)

Friday March 13th 10.30am to 12.00pm

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

Friday March 27th from 2.00pm to 3.45pm

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

APRIL 2026

Wednesday April 1st from 2.15pm to 4.00pm

Branch Meeting at Our Lady of Peace Church, 338 Wokingham Road, Earley RG6 7DA
"University of Reading research on speech and language issues relevant to Parkinson's disease".
Fatemeh Mollaei, Principal Investigator, Centre for Integrative Neuroscience and Neurodynamics (CINN), School of Psychology and Clinical Language Sciences, University of Reading.

Activities organised and supported by the Reading Branch of Parkinson's UK
Before attending any of these classes, please contact the named lead to identify the best class for you and ensure space is available

Pilates (RBA02)	Our Lady of Peace, Earley, Reading RG6 7DA	Pilates is beneficial for people with PD, helping to improve core strength, flexibility, balance & coordination. The low impact-controlled movement of Pilates can help in addressing some of the movement difficulties associated with PD such as stiffness & slowness. 12:45 to 13:45 Every Wednesday Rod Whettem 07733 554321
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. Next sessions: Thursday 22 nd January 2026, 5 th February 2026 and fortnightly thereafter. From 11:00 to 12:15. 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 & 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 Colette Wood 07766 224669
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 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 & some circuits. Classes are led by a specialist neurophysio therapist. On the first Monday of the month the group meet for tea/coffee, cake and a chat after the class. 1:30 to 15:30 Every Monday Colette Wood 07766224669
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 & some circuits. Classes are led by a specialist neurophysio

	RG4 7EZ	therapist. 15:00 to 16:00 Every Wednesday 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. Currently paused. New block likely to commence February 2026, dates and venue to be confirmed. 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 & co-ordination for people with PD. It's a non contact workout meaning it does not involve fighting another person and focuses on movements that mimic boxing techniques like punching & footwork. 16:00 to 16:45 2nd & 4th Wednesday every month Colette Wood 07766 224669
Activities organised without Reading Branch involvement – for details contact provider		
Wokingham Boxercise Boxing Exercise (Comm 2)	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 & co-ordination 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 & 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=£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 & coffee afterwards. 13:45 for 14:00 start to 15:00 Every Thursday - Walk may be cancelled due to adverse weather conditions. Derek Holloway 07843 584900
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 & will vary by week. 12:00 to 13:00 Every Monday

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 (SC03755)

		Molly Hale - mailto: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 & will vary by week. 11.:40 to 12:40 Every Thursday from 11/09/25 until 27/11/25 Molly Hale - mailto: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
Medium Intensity Neurophysio class 2 (Ind3)	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. 14:00 to 14:45 Every Wednesday Sarah Mindham 7540134530

***New* Yoga Classes**

Therapeutic Yoga

Two series of classes in therapeutic yoga will start in February, one in Reading and one in Bracknell. Classes will be weekly and will cater for a range of mobility. Thanks to a grant from Parkinson's UK, they will be free to participants. Yoga training has been shown to be effective in improving motor symptoms, balance function and help with mood as well. As is standard for exercise and therapy classes, there will be a health screening for anyone taking part.

If you are interested, please email nilloofar.br@nilbon.co.uk with your preference for a location.

Fundraising Update

It has been a very good few weeks for Branch fundraising activities:

Collection from the Bach Choir in Reading - **£156.00**

Christmas dinner Raffle: **£332**

Christmas Tesco Bucket Collection - **£1249.70**

Asda, Lower Earley Bucket collection - **£539.16**

Thank you to all who volunteered their time at all these events.

Whitchurch Art Café

Saturday April 11th from 10.30am to 12.00pm

You are invited to the Whitchurch Art Café, The Old Stables RG8 7DF (opposite the Ferryboat Inn)
Delicious cakes, tea and coffee in aid of Parkinson's UK Reading Branch.

Tony Ellis

Very sadly, we have to report that our member Tony Ellis died suddenly on Christmas Day. Our heartfelt condolences go out to Sarah and his family. As featured in our Newsletter last September, Tony was DJ'ing in London from the age of 20 and was a highly regarded figure on the Northern Soul scene. Last year he decided to hang up his headphones, and his last gig took place in Teddington, raising over £1100 for the Reading Parkinson's branch.

Tony was a keen drummer and an enthusiastic member of the branch's "BEAT Parkinson's!" samba drumming group. His snare drumming skills, musical knowledge, stock of anecdotes, and wry good humour will be sadly missed.