

READING BRANCH

Quarterly Newsletter – Summer 2026

For every Parkinson's journey

CHANGE ATTITUDES. FIND A CURE. JOIN US.



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Parkinson's UK



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www.parkinsonsreading.org.uk

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

Parkinson's UK Reading and District Branch

Est. 1978

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.

Contacts:

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Reading and District Branch Membership Information

The suggested donation 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.

From The Chair

Geoff Gee – Branch Chair

Heatwave!

From the chair

As I write, I have retreated to the coolest room in the house to sit out a (hopefully) short-lived heatwave, with promise to get back to comfortably warm in a couple of days. I never used to be a fan of warm weather, but like so many things, dealing with Parkinson's has meant adjusting my view. I now find getting a bit chilled makes muscle stiffness worse, and I've noticed that the warmer weather is helpful. So if temperatures stay in the comfortable 20s, rather than the oppressive 30s, I will look forward to enjoying the summer. We also announced our plan to start a respite scheme to help care partners get some time off from supporting their person, featured later in this edition.

Welcome Dr Chatterjee

We were very pleased to welcome Dr Chatterjee and members of the RBH team to our May meeting.

We heard from the Parkinson's nurse, the physio, the occupational therapist and the speech and language therapist talking about what they can each do to help us. It is good to see this multi-disciplinary approach from our local hospital.

We are aware that the caseloads that some of them are dealing with are not ideal, and as a question on the day highlighted, it is not always obvious how to get referred to some of the team.

The year ahead

The committee has been reviewing how we keep you up to date with what is happening in the branch. As well as the new look and feel, we have made two changes to our branch newsletter.

We have taken out the listings of our regular classes and put them in a separate booklet which we will update twice a year, and we have switched the newsletter from a bi-monthly publication to quarterly. Our next step is to see how we can improve the website, to make the latest information available there.

Wednesday July 15th 7.45pm
An Ideal Husband, by Oscar Wilde

Tickets available: £16 each!

Following our successful evening at the theatre in 2024, we are again lucky to have a charity night to raise funds and enjoy an evening's entertainment.

In true Wilde fashion, this comedy of manners is a sparkling satire with a plot revolving around blackmail and scandal in public life.

Tickets on sale for members and non-member at monthly meetings and cafes, or to reserve seats, email chair@parkinsonsreading.org.uk

If you need seats with access on the flat, ask for row A.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Pilates for Parkinson's: Move Better, Feel Stronger

Interest in our Parkinson's Pilates class has grown steadily over the past six months, so much so that we're pleased to announce a second weekly class. **From Wednesday 3rd June**, two classes will run back-to-back, enabling more people to take part.

Our sessions are led by an experienced Pilates instructor who understands the needs of people living with Parkinson's. Each class includes a mix of seated, standing, and for those who wish, mat-based exercises, with accessible alternatives always provided.

Pilates is one of the most effective low-impact activities for people with Parkinson's. Its slow, controlled movements can help address many of the common physical challenges associated with the condition:

- Improved balance and stability
- Better posture and easier breathing
- Reduced stiffness and greater flexibility
- Smoother, more confident walking
- Enhanced coordination & body awareness

For more information please contact:

Elaine Elliman, Therapies Co-ordinator

(0785040970) therapies@parkinsonsreading.org.uk

Extended Special Offer - Thursday Zoom Based Exercise Class Free of Charge

*We are very pleased to confirm advise we are extending this opportunity, and our weekly Zoom-based exercise class will be available **free of charge until further notice!*** This offer applies to everyone whether you currently attend the class or not.

Download the free Zoom App onto your phone, tablet, laptop or PC. Then start the App and join the meeting, entering the meeting ID and password when prompted.

Zoom meeting ID: 859 771 2511
Password: nD42pD Meeting Number

Thursday from 12.45pm to 1.30pm & focuses on movement and balance for people with PD and is a mix of standing and seated exercises, led by Sarah Papworth.

Please contact Nigel Crabb if you have any questions or just join a session, on any Thursday, a few minutes before the 12.45pm start time. We look forward to seeing you there!

Email: npcrabb@gmail.com Tel. 07810 554650

Do you hate exercise?

You are definitely not alone! Right from when you were at school, exercise wasn't for you. Or maybe it just happened as you got older and it became more difficult? Whatever the case, I'm here to tell you that People with Parkinsons have to put all that behind them and learn to love exercise. It can be done, please believe me!

First of all, why should you bother? Al can explain it better than I can: Based on current research, the single best, most evidence-based thing you can do to manage Parkinsons and potentially slow its progression is to commit to a regular exercise routine. While medication is crucial for managing symptoms, exercise is the only thing shown to potentially modify the course of the disease by improving mobility, balance and cognitive function".

So, what's not to like about that?

Next, how can you get started? Your very own Reading Branch of Parkinsons has many groups which you can join, all taught by experienced professionals. Being in a social group can really help to motivate you. We even have a zoom class if you prefer to begin your exercise journey in your own home. Some other classes we offer are yoga, gentle movement, boxercise, drumming and Pilates.

If you want to improve your balance, posture, flexibility, mobility and strength don't waste any more time.

Contact us on therapies@parkinsonsreading.org.uk or call 07850540970 or 07733554321

Future of yoga class

The yoga classes that have been running on Friday lunchtimes have been well attended and enjoyable. The current series was funded by a grant from Parkinson's UK and comes to an end in June. We are in the process of sorting out how to continue this, using branch funds to subsidise costs and ask for £5 per session from people attending.

Watch out for further detail in June,

Many thanks to Sarah Ellis and friends in remembrance of her late husband Tony Ellis - over £3800 to support our Branch activities.

Thanks to, The Whitchurch Art Cafe in April - they raised an amazing £723 for our Branch.

Many thanks to the Reading Male Voice Choir who performed for our Branch back in February - very pleased to report that they raised over £2200

Parkinson's UK – Reading Respite Care for Supporters of People with Parkinson's

We realise how hard supporting and caring for your Parkinson's partner can be and how difficult it is for you to get some time to yourself. Would it help if you could occasionally pay a carer to sit with your partner whilst you had a few hours to yourself?

If so, your Branch would like to help through our Respite Support fund. We have set aside £5,000 and funds are available on a first-come, first-served basis. We will not be making any judgements on who is most deserving. Respite Support is open to any Branch members who are caring for someone with Parkinson's.

All you have to do is:

- Fill in the attached form on next page and send it to
treasurer@parkinsonsreading.org.uk
- Find a care agency, and book a few hours for a professional carer to come to your own home
- Enjoy your "time off"
- Pay their invoice in full then send us a copy
- We will refund you 50% of that invoice, up to a maximum of £400 per person per year.



Unfortunately, the Branch can't recommend care agencies to you, but some of your Parkinson's friends may be able to.

Do contact us if you have any queries.

Parkinson's UK Reading Branch Respite Support Application Form

Name

Address

.....

.....

Telephone

Email

Name of Person Being Cared For

Name of Care Agency providing care

Date(s) of care

Approximate cost of care

By signing this application form, I/we confirm that:

- The person named above as being cared for has been diagnosed with Parkinson's and is a member of the Reading Branch of Parkinson's UK.
- I/we have arranged respite care for the above named person and I/we acknowledge that I/we are responsible for the selection of the care provider and the care to be provided by them, for paying all of the costs incurred by the care provider in providing the care, and for dealing with any queries that may arise with the care provider.
- I/we will provide Parkinson's UK Reading Branch Treasurer with copies of invoices for this care. On receipt of the invoice(s) the Branch Treasurer will validate the application and will reimburse 50% of the care costs to the applicant up to a maximum amount of £400 per year per applicant.
- I/we have provided my bank account details to which any reimbursements will be sent and my/our contact details in case of any queries regarding this application.
- Reimbursement of any costs is not an endorsement or recommendation by Parkinson's UK or their Reading Branch of any particular care provider.

Signed Name of Applicant

Name of Bank Account

Bank Name

Sort CodeAccount Number

Please return your completed form to treasurer@parkinsonsreading.org.uk