Summer Newsletter
July 2022

We've been back to face-to-face group meetings now for 4 months…Where has the time gone? Since February we have enjoyed all sorts of different activities. We've had enamelling and silver work. Candle making and a sleep clinic. We've had information groups and the fire service. We are thrilled to have our old favourite Boyd and his African Drumming circle back. That sure does make us smile. Everyone thoroughly enjoyed A&S animal encounters too. We should have a bearcat at group every week.

Getting back to a new normal after covid has been a lengthy time. We have slowly eased back into things and are now looking forward to running social events that we all enjoy and have missed. We the trustees want to say a massive thank you to everyone that has supported our covid policy where we all test each week prior to attending group. You have also not attended if you had an illness of sorts and we appreciate this so much. Our overall aim is to look out for one another and try and stay safe.

Zoom

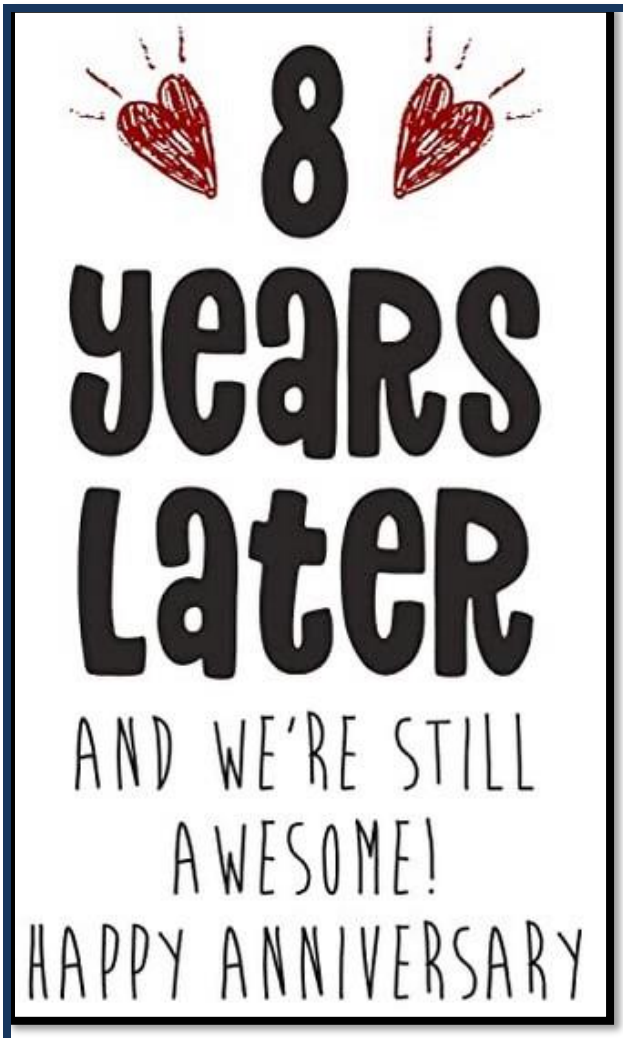
During lockdown, Zoom was a saviour for a lot of us where we met daily caught up and saw faces that we were unable to see in person. This was a wonderful platform and allowed us to do many things. Since Covid restrictions have been relaxed we now enjoy zoom on a Tuesday where we enjoy Maureen's five question quiz and on a Thursday where Heleena hosts Scattergories.

Anyone is welcome to join us on these evenings we start at 7 pm and go on till about 8 pm sometimes a little later, to do this all you have to do is download the zoom app and put in the following details:

Meeting ID: 5598955681

Password: 888082

We would love to see you. All you have to do is sign in and enjoy the evening, everyone is welcome. If anybody would like to join us and is unsure of what to do technically I will be more than happy to talk you through it and have a practice run online with you I will even talk you through putting the zoom app on your device over the phone all you have to do is ask I really don't mind. Paul 01639-797979



Happy 8th anniversary to us!!!!

What an awesome journey it has been, from our initial launch day to gauge interest from local stroke survivors, to our first ever meeting in Melincryddan Community Centre in July 2014.
We have held hundreds of weekly group meetings and hundreds of online zoom sessions. Countless social events, amazingly successful fundraisers, so many days out, lunches and walks, the list goes on and on.
We won the best stroke group in the UK! Wow!
We have made lifelong friends, we have also lost friends. We have shared lots of laughter and sometimes tears.
Through Covid we learned to adapt and become resilient, we unfairly lost a venue that we considered to be home after 6 years but we found a new more accommodating venue, which is now truly our home.
Within one week of lockdown we were hosting daily zoom sessions to keep us sane. We found a new way to keep in touch with each other through our wellbeing deliveries, newsletters, phone calls, a Whatsapp group and social media.
We tentatively returned to face-to-face meetings and now have lots of lovely new attendees. Not everything we do is to everyone's taste but we strive to provide a huge range of activities and events that will enhance one another's lives.
We have found for 8 solid years, that our group and the things we do, challenges our post stroke limitations. We do things that we thought were no longer possible. Certainly, we wouldn't do these things alone but together as a group we will try anything. Maybe eating at a restaurant may not seem a feat to most but to many of us we have lost the confidence to do this and it is terrifying for someone who has aphasia. Together, we can do this.
We have seen our attendees grow (not just in numbers), we have watched them improve physically, mentally and emotionally. From someone who was scared to smile and talk at their first group meeting to someone that takes time and care with their appearance and now engages in chats and laughter.
Recovery from stroke is different for every single one of us.
We have also witnessed loved ones and carers recover because they too are just as much impacted by stroke. We share information and our stories that helps our loved ones through the darkest of days.
Most of us have a common bond in that we have lost friends and family post stroke but our group has given us new friends, new friends that understand, new friends that do not judge, new friends that are happy to see us, new friends we can have a good old laugh with.
We wouldn't be a group without every single one of you. Let's all enjoy a new normal and new friends with lots of things to look forward to. Happy 8th Anniversary to us all.

David Hood

I had my stroke in March 2019. It left me without the use of my left arm and my left leg. I now use a wheelchair but I also can get about using a walking aid. Since my stroke medical intervention has been severely lacking. A good thing that has come of it all is finding the Neath Port Talbot Stroke Group. The group gives me a lot of help and I always have something to look forward to each week in Briton Ferry. I have also been getting some help from Jackie Coates with my arm.

I live on my own and I have been on my own since 2013 when I lost my wife, Julie. Recently I have started driving again and that has given me a lot of freedom to get out and about and I don't have to rely on other people to take me. I have also been awarded a P.A. for 9 hours a week, which is a great help. Having someone in the house to chat to has made a big impact and has lifted the monotony of being on my own.

I most enjoy about being part of NPTSG is going on zoom and our weekly meetings. I have made lots of new friends since joining. I have come out of my shell a lot and it has made a huge benefit to my life.

The Mayor of Neath Port Talbot County Borough

We are delighted and honoured that the Mayor of Neath Port Talbot County Borough has chosen to support us as one of his local charities during his Mayoral year. He will be visiting us at group on the 17th August so we can find out more about him, his chosen charities and the work he does as an ambassador for the area, supporting local community, voluntary and charity groups throughout the year.

Neath Port Talbot Council elects a new mayor for each civic year.

The Mayor's role is to be an ambassador for the area, supporting local community, voluntary and charity groups throughout the year.

The Mayor for 2022/23 is Councillor Robert Wood and the mayoress is Mrs Sylvia John.

The Deputy Mayor of Neath Port Talbot is Councillor Chris Williams.

The Mayor's Charities

Councillor Wood has chosen the National Autistic Society and **Neath Port Talbot Stroke** Group to be his two charities during his time as Mayor.

Events

As well as carrying out many civic duties during the year, chairing meetings of the full Council and attending annual events, the Mayor is involved with a programme of activities designed to raise awareness of all the good work being carried out across the county borough and/or raise funds for the Mayor's Charities.

Facebook

For the latest information on the Mayor's activities and Charities, you can follow the Mayor on Facebook

ROCK BOTTOM TO MOUNTAIN TOP

CLIMBING PEN Y FAN FOR STROKE SURVIVORS

Hi, I'm Michael. In 2019 when I was 24 my world was turned up-side down by a massive stroke.

I couldn't talk, eat, walk, even take care of myself.

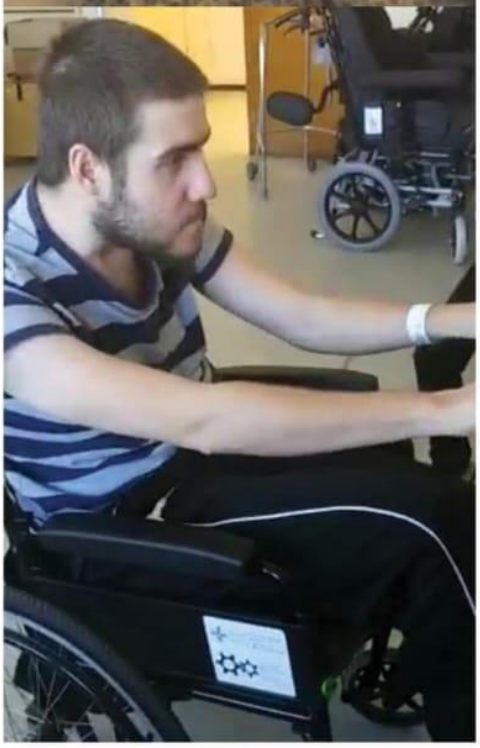
Before this I loved playing football, playing the guitar, I was a teaching assistant and sports coach for kids of all ages.

I thought my life was over.

Three years on and I've learnt a lot about myself and started to rebuild my life.

I've set myself a challenge to climb Pen-y-Fan to raise money for three charities that have had a massive impact on my recovery journey.

I want to raise awareness of stroke in younger people, and inspire other stroke survivors that **nothing is impossible if you push yourself hard enough and dare to have a go.**



RAISING MONEY FOR:

Stroke Association

Neath Port Talbot Stroke Group

Marauders Men's Health

EVENT SPONSORED BY:

Neuro Physio Wales
Restoring balance to daily life!

Medigarments Ltd
DESIGNED AROUND YOU

Jobskin SDO

AFAN LIDO FOOTBALL CLUB

SCAN TO DONATE

FOLLOW

Rock Bottom to Mountain Top

Rock bottom to mountain top

Michael Pursey first came to us at our 'World Stroke Day' event held in October 2019. Michael was severely affected by his stroke and came along in a wheelchair. Michael incredibly will be climbing Pen Y Fan to raise money for his 3 chosen charities overleaf. Please support Michael and help him to raise monies for 3 fantastic charities and raise awareness for stroke in younger people.

We are so proud of you Michael you have come so far!!

Please help support our group while you're shopping through Amazon Smile & your local Co-op

Support us with amazonsmile

You shop. Amazon gives.

Amazon has a charity arm which will donate 0.5% to the charity of your choice. This is called Smile.Amazon. We have now registered our group with Amazon. When first visitingsmile.amazon.co.uk, customers are prompted to select a charitable organisation. Amazon will give 0.5% of the net purchase price (excluding VAT and other shipping fees) of eligible AmazonSmile purchases to the charitable organisations selected by our customers. To enable this to happen you just follow the link below where you will be able to select our group. You need to type our name in as Neath Port Talbot Stroke Group. Once selected, Amazon should remember that you have done this each time you purchase something from Amazon. It will not cost you anything. Prices are kept the same on all Amazon items. The only difference is we will receive a donation once a quarter from Amazon.

Co-op Local Cause

The Co-op Local Community Fund supports projects across the UK that our members care about. This year we 'Neath Port Talbot Stroke Group' have been chosen as a cause to support. Every time our members buy selected Co-op branded products and services, Co-op will give local causes a helping hand. Please buy a Co-op card for £1 in store and select us online as your cause to support or if you are already a member make sure to change to our cause online. This will run for 12 months and the last time we were supported it raised an incredible £3000 for our group!!!

Walk in Jersey Park

A few weeks ago after our normal weekly meeting on Wednesday morning, 35 of us took a walk up Jersey Park where we enjoyed a gentle stroll. We had a pasty and sausage roll from Tan y Groes Street Bakery along with a packet of crisps and a can of pop. Not only that but we had a visit from Paul's ice cream van who supplied us with delicious ice creams (I had an oyster shell something I haven't had for about 30 years and I must say it invoked a lot of memories). Which left some of us a little messy and with some washing to do when we got home. This was a great couple of hours out in the fresh air and sunshine and something the Group could do more often, a little exercise will do us all good and yes I am at the top of that list. Paul.

Queen's Platinum Jubilee Afternoon Tea Celebration

NPTSG celebrated in style at the Manor Park set in fabulous countryside that provided a fabulous backdrop and had decorated the room to ensure we had a lovely time and decorations added to by our Emma.

A photo arch provided a great memory making opportunity on the day. The Manor Park provided a fabulous afternoon tea and there was plenty of chatter as we managed to have a long-awaited social occasion. This was a long overdue occasion to celebrate the Queen, but also us getting back to some normality. There were lots of catching up to do and friends new and old to see and chat to.

The raffle went well and of course the infamous raffle winner Phil won a prize!!!!!!

All attendees were presented with a memorial of the day in the shape of a lovely Jubilee limited edition musical biscuit tin. They are fabulous and such a useful item as well as being delicious that may well end up on antiques show in the future, minus the biscuits of course!

Karaoke was slow starter but once Paul gave us a rendition with his sweet voice everyone was keen to get involved. However, the main singers were Mark Lewis and his family who totally LOVED it!!!! Helena

The Egypt Centre

On Monday, the 27th of June, 20 of us visited the Egypt Centre based at Swansea University. Our two guides Ken and Rex are very knowledgeable and gave us two very interesting guided tours. In our group Rex was the guide and we started upstairs in the land of the living where we saw artefacts take him back over 7000 years and even saw two necklaces that are believed to have belonged to Tutankhamun's sisters. After this we ventured downstairs to the land of the dead where there were all sorts of intriguing artefacts including a highly decorated coffin that once held a mummy. We then had a demonstration of how a mummy was prepared and the processes that were involved this was a very interesting trip and many of us want to go again. We will try to arrange this again in the future as many people were unable to visit due to illness this time and the people that did attend have expressed an interest in going again. Hope you all enjoyed.

What we have coming up for you to enjoy

Saturday 30th July – Car Treasure Hunt

On Saturday, the 30th of July we are holding another treasure hunt which will be leaving the car park in Briton Ferry at 11 am to 11:30 am. The treasure hunt is done in your car and you are welcome to bring anybody with you in your car and invite friends and family to come along as well the only stipulation is that everybody does a lateral flow test and brings it with them on the day. The whole treasure hunt should take about two hours to 2 hours 15 mins and it will be followed at the end destination by a delicious meal where one course is £8 or two courses main and dessert is £11. The end venue does not have disabled toilets however there are grab rails in each cubicle. we also have a dedicated room for our food. For those of you who have never been on a treasure hunt before you have to follow the route By working out the direction riddles as well as collecting clues along the way solving puzzles and collecting treasure for example previous treasure has included things such as three feathers or a pack of bourbon biscuits with the cream licked out of each biscuit or a set of teeth you can use your imagination and you will need to think outside of the box it is a lot of fun and there are no extra charges for this event you are quite welcome to bring friends or family we look forward to seeing you, let the games begin.

BikeAbility Wales
the inclusive cycling charity

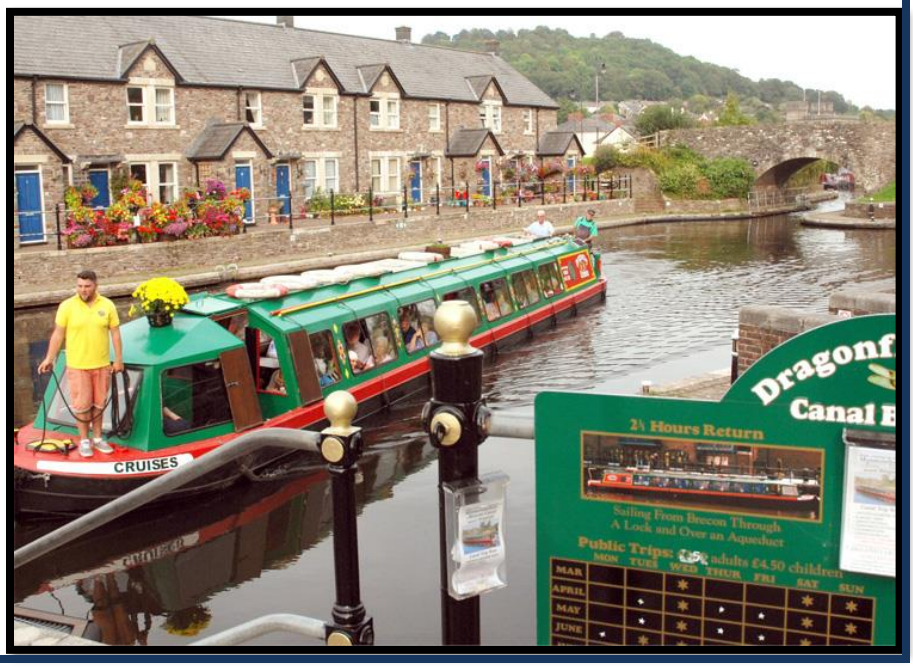
Thursday 11th August – Bikeability

On the 11th August we will be paying a visit to Bikeability Wales in Swansea. Here you will find many types of bikes that suit all abilities.

We last visited Bikeability in 2019 and we had great fun. Some of our group were adamant that they didn't want to have a go! However, by the end of the session everyone tried out one or more bikes to find which suited them best. They have bikes for solo riders and also tricycles for two. You will be amazed at how much fun you can have on a bike! We hope that everyone will want to come along and have a go. Bikeability has its own circuit, which is very flat and everything is done safely and there are plenty of people to help. The bikes can be hired. The venue is located next to a public footpath/cycle track which runs down to Swansea Bay so if you wanted to hire a bike in the future you have instant access to the seafront. Lets hope the weather is good and we can all have a great time!

Thursday 15th September – Day trip to Brecon

We will be running a day trip to Brecon. We will be leaving Milland Road car Park at approximately 9.15 and will be returning once finished somewhere around 6.30. On arrival in Brecon we will be going straight to the Royal Welsh Museum where there The Zulu collection is held then there will be free time in Brecon for lunch and a little bit of shopping I must say the shops are lovely. After which we will then be going down to Brecon Canal where we will go on a barge trip along the Brecon Canal after this we will return home back to Milland Road car park more details and prices of this trip will be announced nearer the date once everything is arranged however we will be taking names of those that are interested shortly.



Unpaid carer financial support scheme

What funding is available?

A one-off £500 payment is available for unpaid carers receiving Carer's Allowance on 31 March 2022.

Eligible unpaid carers can claim the payment from their local council.

The money will help those who experienced extra costs because they were looking after someone during the pandemic. People who receive Carer's Allowance provide over 35 hours of care each week and are on the lowest incomes.

Who can register?

You will be eligible for the payment if:

- you were receiving Carer's Allowance on 31 March 2022
- your application for Carer's Allowance is in progress and your claim is backdated to 31 March 2022
- you live in Wales

You will not be eligible for the payment if:

- you have an underlying entitlement to Carer's Allowance, but do not receive a payment because you are in receipt of another benefit at the same or higher rate
- you only receive a carer premium within a means tested benefit

How to claim

Your council will check that you are eligible for the payment. To do this, a registration process will open from 9am 16 May 2022.

The registration process will close at **5pm 15 July**. You must submit your registration form before then.

You can register via your local council's website, over the phone, or in person.

Be aware of fraudsters asking for your bank details. Never share your bank details with people you don't know.

You need to register through your council. They will be responsible for processing your payment.

Councils will pay all successful claims by 30 September 2022.

You do not need to inform the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) Carer's Allowance Unit if you claim the £500. Your local authority can help with any queries you may have.

You may still be experiencing severe financial hardship. If so, you may wish to make a claim to the **Discretionary Assistance Fund (DAF)**.

Will the payment affect other benefits?

The payment will not impact any benefits you may be receiving.

The payment will not:

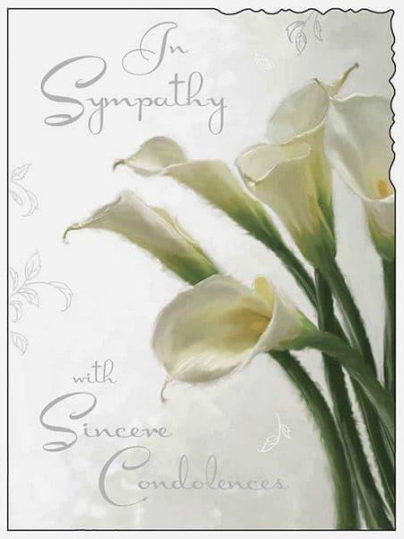
- be taxable
- be subject to National Insurance contributions
- be included as part of income when calculating entitlement for tax credits

For more information on this payment contact:

olderpeopleandcarers@gov.wales

Upcoming Group Meetings & Events

13th July – Storytelling with Carl
20th July – Hot Dog Day
27th July – Robs Music Quiz
30th July – Treasure Hunt – See Paul
3rd August – Rapidough
10th August – African Drumming
11th August – Bikeability TBC
17th August – NPT Mayor and Mayoress
24th August – Chair Yoga
31st August – Healthy Eating
7th Sept – Bath Bombs & Sugar Scrubs
14th Sept – Book Folding
15th Sept – Day out Brecon Zulu museum and river boat tour
21st September – Care & Repair
28th Sept – Debra John Performance



In Sympathy
Since our last newsletter we have lost some valued attendees that have passed away. They will forever be in our hearts. We have a remembrance bench outside the visitor centre in the Gnoll Park so attendees, family and friends can sit and remember their loved ones.

Telephone numbers:

Paul: 01639-797979

Maureen: 07880-257125

Emma – 07456-451073

website: nptsg.org.uk

facebook.com/neathporttalbotstrokegroup

Email – info@nptsg.org.uk Phone: 0330 088 4719