

Club Together

Issue 47: Spring/Summer 2017

West Midlands

Make May Purple

Join the thousands of people going **purple this May** to **Change the Story** for those who have been **affected by stroke**.

By supporting **Make May Purple**, you can help us to make sure stroke gets the **attention it deserves**, and **fund vital, innovative research** into **stroke care and treatment**.



Our **clubs and groups** raise **much needed awareness of stroke**, year on year, and we can't **thank you** enough.

We'd like to show everyone the **support you give to us**, to **celebrate all that you do** and **share moments** that demonstrate what Make May Purple is all about.

And, after the success of our **photography competition** last year, we're running it again!

We'll be putting all of your photos

on our intranet for your club or group members to see. Then **Baroness Floella Benjamin** will judge the entries and pick a winner!

All we're asking is that you turn your upcoming events, plans and activities **purple!** From hosting a **purple dress-up day**, to creating **purple snacks** or holding a **purple-themed quiz**, whatever you're doing this May, make it **purple for stroke**.

Our photo competition is open for all **Stroke Association Voluntary Groups** and **Independent Stroke Clubs**, and we'd love to see your entries.

Get involved with Make May Purple and help to **change the story for stroke survivors**.

For more information, visit intranet.stroke.org.uk



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Together we can conquer stroke

Stroke
association

UK Stroke Club Conference 2017



Put the date in your diary for this year's conference, taking place **Friday 29 - Saturday 30 September**, at the **East Midlands Conference Centre in Nottingham**.

The UKSCC is an annual event that **brings together** those involved in **running and volunteering at stroke clubs and groups** across the UK, where delegates can **network** with like-minded people and hear the **latest news** from the stroke community.

In 2016, over **150 representatives from 82 stroke clubs and groups** attended the inspiring event,

sharing experiences and ideas, finding out more about support available for their groups and their members.

Further information and booking forms will be posted to the main contact of all clubs and groups in June. Space is limited so book early.

Here are a few comments from people who have attended the UKSCC in 2016:

"I learnt lots of new information about being a possible peer, and how I can help to support members of my group effectively."

"You can get so much from attending the conference; you make new friends and learn so much that you possibly didn't know before."

"It's a warm and welcoming friendly event, with lots of good ideas."

"It is great for meeting other groups and seeing what they're doing."

Find out more about our event at: **stroke.org.uk/UKSCC**

Could an Essential Aid help with your recovery?

We've partnered with **Essential Aids** (essentialaids.com), a retail website that offers a huge range of rehabilitation items that can aid you while you're in recovery and help you adapt to life after stroke.

Their products cover all aspects of **day-to-day living**, ranging from bathing and dressing, food preparation and dining, to work and leisure activities. Some popular items include a multi-functional rolling walker with a seat and basket, to enable you to walk, carry shop and rest.



They also sell a selection of adapted kitchen and eating aids, many designed for use with one hand, like the ingenious Knork, a combination knife and fork (pictured). Essential Aids also have a wide variety of shower stools and grab rails, which can help to provide stability and security while you're bathing.

For more ideas, go to **stroke.org.uk/daily-living-aids**, visit **essentialaids.com** or phone Essential Aids on **01273 719 889**. If you're a stroke survivor, or buying on their behalf please **tick the box** at the checkout and **Essential Aids will donate 5% of the item price to us**.

Inspired ideas

You might think that writing is a solitary activity, but it can be something that the whole of your club or group can do together.

Writing is a really good way to get your feelings out, to confront issues you may not want to talk about directly, or to share experiences with your group in a new way.

Here are a few exercises that your club or group could do together:

Write a short story

Start off by developing the main characters first, then your plot for the short story. Each group member could then write the story from a different character's point-of-view, only writing a couple of paragraphs. If you're a large group, split into teams and take on one character together. You could use this as a way to confront something that's on your mind, or to be as creative as possible! Read out your collaborative story one team, or person, after another. See where the story takes you!

Describe a scene

You could reflect on your stroke journey, and visualise where you are, where you've come from, and perhaps, where you're heading. You could focus on something from your daily life, your past, or something you've imagined. Make sure to use the senses in your description of the scene - using sight, sound, touch, smell and taste will make it easier for others to imagine what you're describing.

Choose a category

This is a great way to talk about things that are on people's minds without having to directly talk about them. Put category suggestions into a hat and pass it around, choosing a category as you go - it could be a question, or a thought. Write a 'flash fiction' paragraph of 50 words - you'll get some very interesting stories this way and some different points of view. Do this for as many categories as you'd like.

"I have lost my words, not my intellect"



June is **Aphasia Awareness Month**. We need your help to **share stories of communication difficulties**, and to show everyone how to **support people affected by aphasia**.

We're sending **Aphasia International Association (AIA)** postcards to our **Speakability groups** to distribute across the UK, as part of a worldwide **month of action**.

All of our **clubs and groups** can support Aphasia Awareness Month by **sharing postcards**, and by **using social media** to share your stories of **living with aphasia**.

We'll be sharing stories of people like **John Smejka**, who said, **"I couldn't speak or write after my stroke, but I was desperate to get my voice back."**

Thanks to **stroke research**, John is now **relearning the speech he needs** to enjoy life - from ordering a family meal out to volunteering with other stroke survivors. We want to **raise funds for research** that can **change the story** for people like John, who are affected by stroke.

Share your stories on **Facebook, Twitter** and **Instagram** using the hashtags **#Aphasia** and **#ChangetheStory**.

Order your AIA postcards from **stroke.org.uk/aphasia** or call **01604 231000** and help us to **raise awareness of aphasia** this June.

Volunteer survey shows positive results for clubs and groups volunteers

In January, we sent a survey to our volunteers across the UK, including Stroke Association Voluntary Group volunteers. We do this survey to **inform our work**, and to gain a **better understanding** of the 3,500 volunteers who support us.

We wanted to share **some insight we gained and the responses** we had from **volunteers who support clubs and groups**:

The overall volunteer satisfaction rate was 80%, while the SAVG satisfaction rate was a little higher, at 82%.

When asked what the best thing about volunteering for the Stroke Association was, nearly 58% said it was helping, supporting, or seeing improvement in stroke survivors.

A further 26% said it was meeting people, making new friends, giving them a sense of purpose or independence.

90% felt that their volunteering role(s) have had an impact on the wellbeing of stroke survivors and carers.



There were some very **touching and positive comments** made that we're keen to share:

"It gives me great pleasure to see people who I take to the group meetings get real enjoyment, and start to communicate again, because meeting people is a vital part of the recovery. Out of the darkness, light begins to emerge."

"My personal impression is that I do somehow seem to make a difference. A survivor recently said "I feel safe when you're here" which made me feel proud."

"I have had a stroke myself and have been given a second chance, I need to help those survivors all I can. There is life after stroke."

Christmas comes early this year

We're pleased to offer your stroke club or group an opportunity to **buy and sell Stroke Association Christmas cards and stocking fillers** again, in order to help you raise money for your group.

You can buy all items from our Christmas catalogue at a **15% discount**, to **resell at retail price**, with the **funds generated going directly to your stroke club or group**.

Last year, you gave us feedback to let us know that not all of our groups had **enough time to get their orders in**, so we wanted to get the word out a little

earlier this year. Please note that only the **stroke club or group order form will be subject to a 15% discount on items**, and each club or group can order a **maximum of 200 items**.

Your group can order these items up until **1 December 2017**. By ordering these at a discounted rate, you're **agreeing to sell them at the original retail price**.

To request your order form or for more information, please call **0207 566 1540**.

Get involved in your community by taking on a challenge or two - or three!

Our **Community Challenges** were introduced to encourage your group to work towards making your community **stroke friendly**, and to **increase fundraising, stroke awareness and local support** for those affected by stroke in your area. The year ahead is filled with events and opportunities, the perfect time to think about what challenge **your group** could undertake.

There are **three community challenges** that your group could complete to help make your community stroke friendly, and you can complete just one, two or all three.

The community challenges are:



Prevention

To increase local people's understanding of how strokes occur and how they can be prevented



Working Together

To engage with other groups and organisations in your area to increase awareness and support for stroke in the community



Fundraising

To provide volunteer opportunities for local people and increase the financial sustainability of your group

Each challenge has **three themes** to consider and implement. These are to **take action**, **engage with local people** and **spread the word** to ensure that your group is as involved with your community as possible.

Recognition of your challenge will be awarded to **registered groups** that complete one or more challenges, and these include **certificates**, **wristbands** and **pin badges** to wear with pride.

Community Challenge

Sign up for a challenge today



We have plenty of events that you can link a Community Challenge to, such as Take a Moment, Know Your Blood Pressure, Resolution Runs, Make May Purple, Step Out and Give a Hand.

We have produced our **Let's Take Action** resource for your group to use as a guide, and all groups who register to take on a Community Challenge will be offered support from us throughout your challenge.

Let us know if you'd like to sign up to a Community Challenge by emailing clubtogether@stroke.org.uk.

If you have any questions, please call **0207 566 1540**.



Regional Life After Stroke Awards



The West Midlands was proud to host its regional Life After Stroke Awards in February at Birmingham City Football Club.

It was the perfect celebration of strength, courage and dedication showed by stroke survivors, carers, clubs, groups and professionals across the region.

The **Lord Mayor of Birmingham** opened the event, where everyone who had been nominated for an award was presented with a certificate by **Shelley King** of **Coronation Street** or **Dave Hill** from rock group, **Slade**.

Both stars said a few words about how important the awards were in **recognising achievement over adversity**. Dave went on to talk about his **personal recovery** after he had a stroke.

Each nominee had their own story, each as inspirational and moving as the last.

Our very own Life After Stroke Award winner for Volunteering, **Julie Monk**, came along and gave a motivational talk about how rewarding volunteering is, and how it's helped with her recovery.

At the end of the award ceremony, the **Life After Stroke Singing Group** gave us a beautiful rendition of 'I believe in Angels' by Abba. A perfect end to a heart-warming afternoon.

The Life After Stroke Awards are a great way to recognise the achievements of those **special people who go the extra mile**, through furthering their own recovery, caring for loved ones, providing services or those special groups that provide a lifeline to so many.

Nominations for 2017 have now closed but if you know someone or a group who deserves recognition please make sure you nominate them for 2018 here: stroke.org.uk/lasa



Calling all Stroke Ambassadors

We are always looking for new Stroke Ambassadors to raise awareness and run prevention events. Are you confident? Able to talk to groups of people? Do you want to try something different? If you are interested, please contact Tina Hughes on **07703320660** or email tina.hughes2@stroke.org.uk.

Spotlight on Speakability Burton-on-Trent

About 19 years ago, two small groups of people with aphasia, and their carers, were brought together by **Heather Bailey**, a Speech Therapist from Queen's Hospital in Burton and formed a support group.

As the club grew it became involved with **Speakability** and has recently become part of the **Stroke Association**. Several of the original members are still at the club today.

Last year, we celebrated our 15th official year by having lunch at a nearby hotel. It was attended by the **Mayor of Burton** and her consort, a great honour for us and enjoyed by all. Our Speakability Group now has 49 members and meets every Thursday morning at a hall in Burton, where we offer one to one support to people to help them with their **speech, reading and writing**.

We work in groups with table and floor games, sing-a-longs and painting. None of our volunteers are qualified in any of the above, but it's surprising what can be achieved by **encouragement, listening and laughter**.

Sometimes we just have a 'party' day - last year we had a Hawaiian Day and a Seaside Day!

We organise day trips to museums, the seaside, shopping, visits to a local garden centre or lunch at a local restaurant.

Sometimes we invite people to our club, and recent visits have included the **Fire Service** and **Age UK**. We have planned visits from **St Johns Ambulance** and a **Sign Language Choir**.

We feel like we're a big family, and everyone who crosses our threshold is welcomed with a cup of tea, biscuits and a smile!



4ward Strokes raise awareness

On a Saturday in January, eight volunteers from **4ward Strokes, Leicester**, joined forces with **ASDA** at Fosse Park to



raise awareness of stroke and rattle their tins to raise money for the group.

Armed with their group photo board and banner they **gave out information** relating to monthly meetings, balloons for children, group stickers plus many **Stroke Association booklets and leaflets**.

The team raised in over **£500**. Not bad for a cold Saturday in January!

Contacts

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2017 General Election

Time is running out for stroke survivors: from **December 2017** there will be **no national plan in place for stroke**. We need support in parliament now more than ever, so throughout the elections and beyond, we'll be continuing with our **A New Era for Stroke** campaign, calling for a new national stroke strategy for England.

We are calling on candidates in the **2017 General Election** to pledge their support for a **new national plan**, so that care and treatment for stroke survivors is prioritised, and not overlooked or pushed down the agenda by the new government.

The improvements we want to see are **cost effective** and **vital to patient recovery**, but a national plan is needed to make these improvements possible.

Find the candidates in your area by visiting **stroke.org.uk/GE17** Put in your postcode to be taken to the right information for your area.

We're committed to making sure improvements are made so that **vital support for stroke survivors** is in place.

If you have any questions, please contact **campaigns@stroke.org.uk**

Calendar

Dates for your diary...

Monday 1 - Wednesday 31 May
Make May Purple

Sunday 7 May, 11am
Kings Heath Park
Vicarage Road, B14 7TQ

Sunday 21 May, 11am
Victoria Park, Tipton
Victoria Road, DY4 8LN

Friday 16 June, 11am
Pavilion in the Park, Worcester
Tybridge Street, WR2 4BA

Sunday 29 October
World Stroke Day

  Join our stroke community on Facebook and Twitter