



Update from Deborah Douglas, Breast Friends Chair



Hello Ladies and welcome to our first Lockdown bulletin.

These are strange uncertain times we are living in as we are all getting used to the new "normal", wearing masks to supermarkets and having our hospital appointments over the phone or via video conferencing.

For those who have been shielding it's been particularly hard - my daughter Jenny has gone through a stem cell transplant during this time at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, they have been fantastic and she's now home recovering with her husband and her two girls Sophia and Isabella. Without apps such as FaceTime I would find the separation so much harder.

Staying in Contact

Breast Friends have recognised that without technology we cannot reach out to our members who are used to coming to our monthly meetings. We have a closed Facebook site that members can join, and we are also working on updating our website, which we know is in need of major improvements.

We have applied for a small grant from Macmillan in order to fund supporting our members using technology, which is why last month we carried out a survey of our members to see if they would like to take part in a video conference call. The survey was only active for a couple of days as the data was part of the grant application. The results however were overwhelming, over 80% of you wanted to take part in a call.

We are therefore planning to hold an initial update meeting via 'Zoom' on Tuesday 25th August at 6pm. A link for the meeting has been emailed out to everyone but just to remind you the Meeting Code is 823 9636 4860 and the Passcode is 799097.

We are also hoping to hold another meeting via 'Zoom' or 'Microsoft Teams' on the 8th September, which would have been our original members meeting, with a presentation from a Lymphoedema nurse. Details of this will be emailed out to everyone as soon as we have them.

We are open to ideas on how we can connect with our members and Angela and Wendy have recently organised two socially distanced walk and talks locally (one daytime and one in the evening) where we can get together.

Breast Cancer Services

I've been on a 'Zoom' call with Naren Basu, Lead Cancer specialist for UHB, over this time. Going forward there are many changes that have had to happen because of Covid. Non-emergency operations have been cancelled and reconstructive surgery for breast cancer patients are still on hold - I don't have an update as to when this will be resumed but I will keep you posted.

Paterson Inquiry

A number of our members who were Paterson patients will have received recall letters if they were treated under the NHS saying that their notes have been reviewed. This was as a result of the recommendations from the recently published Government commissioned Paterson Inquiry, which I fought for, to examine how Paterson got away with operating criminally within the NHS and private sectors for nearly 20 years.

The private sector have not as yet sent out letters but have provided contact numbers. If you were a Paterson patient and have concerns you can call the number and request that your notes be reviewed in line with what the NHS are doing. I have posted contact details in the bulletin.

You may also have read in the news that the Police have asked the Coroner to carry out inquests on 23 of his patients. 7 inquests have already opened and the remainder will be announced. Thoughts are with the families of the deceased at this distressing time.

Continued...

Update continued ...

Breast Cancer Haven

I have been saddened and shocked to read in the news the announcement from Breast Cancer Haven notifying us that they are to close their Solihull Centre. Breast Friends have forged links with the centre and signpost ladies there to use the wonderful facilities they have. Our Charity worked extremely hard to fundraise and donated £20,000 to provide the kitchen in the Haven when it opened less than 3 years ago. This is a substantial amount of money for our charity particularly at a time when fundraising activities have been curtailed.

I have started an online petition to save the Haven Solihull, the link is below. I have also written to the local MP Julian Knight - if you want to write to Julian or your local MP I urge you to do so and let them know what a blow this will be to breast cancer support services in our area.

I have spoken at length this morning to Sally Hall, CEO of Haven, to talk about options we could have and the need to work collaboratively with Haven in future to provide support locally to breast cancer patients in our community. Sally has said she will email me and explain in more detail where government funding has gone and why it seems that cancer services are being prioritised in London with the opening of a new centre there next year.

I now have an understanding of the broader issues she is looking at but I feel she should explain them in her own words. I will share her email with the group. If you'd like to sign the petition to save Haven please follow the link:

<http://chnq.it/HRG8LYGs8J>

What's been happening during Lockdown

On a more positive note I asked ladies on our Facebook site what they have been doing during lockdown and what they plan to do after its all over.

I posted by saying I'd baked a lot of bread, am writing a book and that I now have a newfound appreciation of nature and my garden.

Angela Reid however decided to raise much needed funds for Breast Friends and walked 100 miles in the month of June (the anniversary of her breast surgery in 2018).



Angela wrote:

"Needed sun hats and woolly hats! That's June! So far I have achieved £360.00 for Breast Friends on my own 'Just Giving' site. Chuffed to have walked 100 Miles for Solihull Breast Friends".

"I've also grown some lovely new tulips, and had 2 of my photographs chosen for National U3A Photography Challenge. Plan to take a photography course, grow more in my garden and be more involved in Solihull Breast Friends".

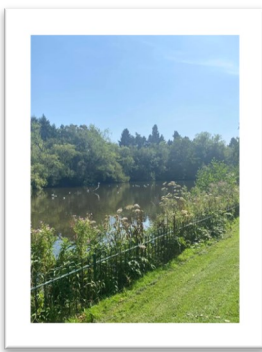
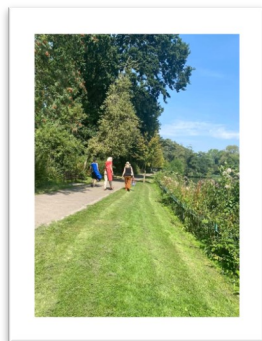
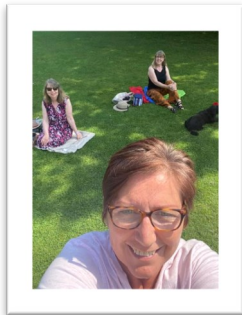


Heartfelt Thanks to Angela and we'd certainly welcome your involvement.

WALK AND TALK

Lovely to meet up for a socially distanced Walk and Talk in Brueton Park on Tuesday 11th August 2020. I think the emphasis was mostly on the talk as we sat in the shade and caught up with everyone. Really enjoyed it.

Thank you to Angela Roberts for organising it.



WALK AND TALK

Future Dates

Breast Friends are 'socialising while social distancing'

Join us for a morning visit to Brueton Park

WEDNESDAY 2ND SEPTEMBER

&

WEDNESDAY 23RD SEPTEMBER

Meet at 11.30am near the front of the Parkridge Centre (100m or so inside park) Park at Warwick Road car park

And join us for an hour or so for a stroll & tea / coffee and a chat.

Bring your own chair and we can socially distance while we re-acquaint with friends from BFS. Bring your own drinks if you wish.

We can buy drinks & some refreshments at the Parkridge Centre. They are selling for 'take-out' only.

For those who wish to we will take a stroll / walk into the park and around the lake or where the mood takes us. We will use the tarmac paths wherever we go so easy underfoot.

If you have been shielding or self-isolating let us know & we will make special efforts to 'stay our distance' and keep us all safe.

Please note the Warwick Road car park is FREE of charge for the first 3 hours.

I have chosen this time to be ahead of the families who can fill the car park spaces and to miss the heat of the afternoon - should it be a hot day!

NB Toilets at the Parkridge Centre are CLOSED

The Park could be busy so it's essential we know who intends to join us. Let me know either via Facebook or our website.

If the weather turns inclement then ring me on 07786 266580

Angela

WALK AND TALK

Cancelled Walk

The 'Socially distanced' evening walk planned for Wednesday 19th August from the Solihull Sixth Form College unfortunately had to be cancelled due to the inclement weather.

Wendy is hoping to reschedule this for **Wednesday 26th August** and will keep us informed of the details via email and Facebook

LOCKDOWN ON THE ALLOTMENT

Sandy Worth writes:

Well, we had to lockdown for the regulation time so where better than on the Breast Friends Allotment in Earlswood.

No problem with isolating there as only Noreen and Malcolm turned up on occasion, with half a field between us!

Very peaceful, just the sound of birdsong and the quarter hour chime of the Clarion Bells. Oh, and the neighbouring peacocks.

Don't forget ladies, if any of you want plenty of exercise to burn off a few calories

THE ALLOTMENT AT EARLSWOOD IS WAITING FOR YOU!!



USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS FOR PATERSON PATIENTS

If you have received a recall letter, please call the PALS contact number on your letter should you have any queries.

If you would like further advice or have concerns please call Gillian Waterhouse on 07738 331911.

For Private patients please call go to <https://www.spirehealthcare.com/paterson-independent-inquiry>

If you were treated by Ian Paterson and have a question regarding your care, please call the dedicated patient helpline on 0191 497 8190, and speak to a member of Spire's specialist team. The helpline is in operation between 9am to 6pm Monday to Friday, and 9am to 1pm Saturday.

If you would like confidential support and advice from an independent organisation, you can also speak to The Patients Association on 0800 345 7115 between 9.30am and 5pm Monday to Friday.

INFORMATION SHARING

Do you have any information you'd like to share with the group?

For example: Healthy Recipes, Coping Strategies, Interesting Articles, Photos, Achievements ...

What have you been up to during Lockdown?

If there's anything you would like me to include in the bulletin please email me:

Bevwalmsley@googlemail.com

CONTACT US

For information, advice and support call 0800-1313-500. All calls are confidential and will be answered by a trained volunteer who has experienced breast cancer. Whatever the call we will do our best to help you.

Visit our Website www.breastfriends-solihull.org.uk

Join our facebook group:
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/108215625896005>