

The Neuro Bureau

Newsletter 34-23



Welcome

We may be physically challenged but we are differently able.

Welcome to our thirty fourth newsletter. Please enjoy the features and photographs. If you would like to make a contribution for a future edition, please get in touch with our editor, Lesley MacLeod.

New members are always welcome. Copies of this newsletter can be emailed to anyone who requests a copy.

We are now meeting every Tuesday between 1030-1300 for coffee/chat/exercise and sandwiches at: NMCC Sports Bar, Summerleaze Park, Summerleaze Road, Maidenhead, SL6 8SP.

Please note our contact number is: 07863 661468

A mystery visitor to the last Sequela meeting ... guess who?



Anke's end of year message

It's Christmas time again and I think we've all enjoyed our Christmas lunch at Maidenhead Golf Club which was nice and warm unlike last year at Norden Farm ...

Looking back on 2023 we had to say goodbye to the lovely Kiran but were lucky to welcome Tina (Tai Chi) and Stephanie (Yoga). We also discovered Faye's talent for doing exercise with us. Nothing ever stays the same, but change can be a good thing if we welcome it with open arms.

I'm pleased to say that this year again we did welcome more new members into our Sequela family and I love seeing everyone getting on so well. Sometimes it's hard to get the exercise class going because we're all having too much fun chatting 😊

I think everyone also thoroughly enjoyed our boat trip and Summer BBQ. If you have any suggestions for other outings or activities, please let me know. My Christmas message wouldn't be complete without saying a big thank you to my fellow trustees, our volunteers and exercise professionals. Without them there would be no Sequela.

On the subject of volunteers, it is my pleasure to announce that the trustees have appointed Judy Percy as Honorary President of the Sequela Foundation in recognition of her considerable contribution to our charity. Judy was a key player in the running of the Sequela Foundation right from the beginning in January 2012 and her background as an MS nurse has been a great asset. Judy did a lot of fundraising and networking for us, and she has been a trustee and Vice Chair of our organisation since its inception, a role which she is now relinquishing. We wish Judy a happy retirement from her official role and look forward to seeing her at our Tuesday meetings as head of the Sequela family.

On a personal note, I had my 40 year anniversary of coming to the UK in October this year. In 1983 I was a young student arriving in Leeds... Time certainly does fly, and little did I know what the future would hold. I certainly hadn't planned to stay that long, but I'm happy I did, and I look forward to being with you for another year. May 2024 bring us many more happy moments together!

I wish you a Merry Christmas with your loved ones as well as health and happiness for the New Year.
With love,

Anke

you know I'm a bit of an animal lover ...!



Cake report

Cake-baker David has started to keep a record of his weekly creations and wants to know if you have any favourites or any requests for a different cake. Over the last three months, we have enjoyed ...

Raspberry & coconut; Lemon & almond; Victoria sponge; Ginger & treacle; Apple crumble; Coffee & walnut; Carrot cake; Iced chocolate; Banana loaf; Orange & sultana; Choc fudge; Choc, raspberry & fennel; Mincemeat loaf

Sequela news snippets

Welcome

Since the last newsletter was published we have welcomed new members: Pablo Dubois accompanied by his wife Lilian; Jess Behan accompanied by her mum Jane and Tim Stotter-Brooks. Please say hello and welcome them to Sequela.

Festive break!

Meetings will NOT be held on Tuesday 26th December or Tuesday 2nd January. Our first meeting in 2024 will be on **Tuesday 9th January**.

Grant

David (Treasurer) reports that earlier this month, we received news that Sequela has been **awarded a grant of £500** towards our running costs. The funding for this grant has been provided by *Localgiving* in partnership with the Postcode Society Trust, a grant giving organisation funded by players of People's Postcode Lottery.

Sequela pays an annual fee (£180 this year) to belong to *Localgiving*.

Subscriptions

Subscriptions for 2024 will be due for payment in January. There is no change to the rate which remains at **£30**. Payment can be made by bank transfer, cash or cheque.

Correction

In the last edition of the newsletter, I published Rita's profile. Somehow, I managed to re-name her as Rita Ashworth when she is of course, Rita Ashmore. Apologies to Rita.

Memories

It was with great sadness that we learned of the passing of Tony's wife Philomena, known to all of us as Phil. Tony and Phil had been married for 48 years.

David represented Sequela at her funeral service on 27th November. Many of Phil's Irish relatives attended including her brother Patrick who sang the songs that he and Phil used to sing together. It was a very moving tribute.

Christmas lunch celebration

We returned to Maidenhead Golf Club for our annual Christmas gathering on Tuesday 19th December and had a very enjoyable lunch. The team at the Golf Club looked after us very well with excellent food and service.

Kevin – resplendent in his Christmas jumper 😊😊 – had put together a Christmas-themed quiz to add to the fun. (... and the answer to the question, ‘What was the total number of gifts in the 12 Days of Christmas song’ is 364 ... or is it 365 ...?!)

Sandy sold even more raffle tickets and raised a fantastic total of £340 for Sequela’s funds – many thanks to Sandy.



Help with home security

Thames Valley Police published this alert on 30th November containing a message from the Maidenhead Community Watch Association

Security items initiative for vulnerable & elderly residents

Since the launch earlier this year, interest in this offer has been most encouraging and we are now inviting more residents to apply. Residents within Maidenhead can benefit from this initiative being promoted by **Maidenhead Community Watch Association** and which is fully supported by Thames Valley Police.

The first step is a free **home security survey**, when a trained operator will assess the security of your property for any potential vulnerability and will make recommendations on how you can improve your safety and security.

On offer are various security items such as window shock alarms, 24-hour timers, fake TVs, etc, all of which are available, at no cost, courtesy of Maidenhead Community Watch Association, for those who cannot afford to purchase their own. Further, they can supply **and fit** other security items such as motion sensitive exterior wall lights, fake CCTV cameras, door chains etc, also at no cost to those who can't afford them.

The project is being financially supported by generous assistance from The Prince Philip Trust Fund, Thames Valley Police Windsor & Maidenhead, the Louis Baylis Trust and Maidenhead Lions; and we have recently received encouraging funding from the Thames Valley PCC, Matthew Barber, from the latest Community Fund allocation.

To benefit from the above, you will need to reside in Maidenhead and be considered as vulnerable or elderly. A vulnerable adult is defined as someone who can't easily take care of themselves, or it might be someone who is unable to protect themselves against significant harm or exploitation.¹

For the purposes of this project, elderly means over 80 years of age, but we are very flexible!

Your safety matters to us, and together, we can build a safer and more resilient community. We look forward to helping you.

If you would like to have a free home security survey, we would be delighted to hear from you. In the first instance please contact the Association Chairman, John Diack, at jrdmcw@gmail.com.

Help with disability adaptations

Barbara has contributed these helpful web links which she discovered in the conversations on the Health Unlocked Ataxia-UK website:

If you are disabled and need to make adaptations in your home, you may be eligible for a grant:

- [Disabled Facilities Grants: Overview - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

For example if you:

- are physically disabled
- have a learning disability
- have age-related needs
- are autistic
- have a cognitive impairment, like dementia
- have a progressive condition, like motor neurone disease
- have a terminal illness
- have a mental health condition

You might need to:

- widen doors and install ramps or grab rails
- improve access to rooms with eg a stairlift, or level access shower
- improve access to your garden
- build an extension, for example a downstairs bedroom
- provide a heating system suitable for your needs
- adapt heating or lighting controls to make them easier to use

A Disabled Facilities Grant won't affect any benefits you get.

If you, or someone you know, needs help to do everyday tasks or you're worried about falling, ask social services for a home assessment.

An occupational therapist will visit you at your home. They'll ask you questions and walk around with you to see what you struggle with. You'll work out what you need together.

[Home adaptations - Social care and support guide - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk)

More information here:

- [Disabled Facilities Grant \(disability-grants.org\)](https://disability-grants.org)

The maximum amount of grant in England is £30,000

The amount you receive depends on your own individual circumstances as the grant is means tested for adults. This takes into account your savings, income and outgoings.

For families with a disabled child under 19 years the grant is not means tested. If the cost of the work is above the maximum grant your local authority has discretionary powers to provide further financial help.

Treasurer's report: David MacLeod

I published a brief report on our finances at the end of last year so thought that I would do the same again this year. As a registered charity, Sequela is regulated by the Charity Commission which requires that we submit an annual report. As our income is less than £25,000 pa, the report is very simple and has to state only our gross income, total expenditure and any income from Government grants.

INCOME: our income for 2023 has four main sources:

Member subscriptions (25 paid members)	£715
Donations from individuals or groups	£563
Raffles	£340
Grants (community organisations or council)	£2,500 **

** £600 from *Louis Baylis Trust*
 £500 from *Local Giving – 'Magic Little Grant'*
 £400 from *Maidenhead Rotary*
 £1,000 from *the Shanly Foundation*

In addition, we have received income from Give as you Live of **£146.39** and Amazon SMILE of **£34.79**. The Amazon scheme has now closed.

In June, we made our first claim for Gift Aid and were paid **£118.11** by HMRC. This covered donations made to Sequela with Gift Aid between July 2019 – March 2023.

The £2 charged for the sandwich lunch is intended to cover the cost; to date, we have paid out £1,584 and collected in £2,078 which includes £84 in advance payments.

EXPENDITURE: our principal expenditure is of course the hire charge for NMCC Sports Bar which is £100 per session. By the end of the year, we will have paid room hire charges totalling £4,900.

Other major expenditure categories have been:

Payments to exercise professionals	£480
Public liability insurance	£241
Website hosting	£60
Bank charges	£70

Once again, the numbers don't reflect the many 'little extras' contributed by our trustees/volunteers plus the overpayments from many members.

We will end the year with a healthy bank balance of approx. £8,900.

Jenny's gems

Getting old is such a joke ...

I've learned that pleasing everyone is impossible, but annoying everyone is a piece of cake.

I'm responsible for what I say, not what you understand.

Common sense is like deodorant: the people who need it the most never use it.

My tolerance for idiots is extremely low these days. I used to have some immunity built up, but obviously there's a new strain out there.

It's not my age that bothers me; it's the side effects.

I'm not saying I'm old and worn out, but I make sure I'm nowhere near the kerb when out for a walk.

As I watch this generation try and rewrite our history, I'm sure of one thing: it will be misspelled and have no punctuation.

As I've become older, people think I've become lazy. The truth is I'm just being more energy efficient.

I haven't got anything done today. I've been in the kitchen trying to open this stupid plastic bag.

Turns out that being a "senior" is mostly just googling how to do stuff.

I want to be 18 again and ruin my life differently. I have new ideas.

I'm on two diets. I wasn't getting enough food on one.

I put my scale in the bathroom corner and that's where the little liar will stay until it apologises.

My mind is like an internet browser. At least 19 open tabs, 3 of them are frozen, and I have no clue where the music is coming from.

Hard to believe I once had a phone on the hall table, and when it rang, I picked it up without knowing who was calling.

Apparently RSVPing to a wedding invitation saying - "Maybe next time" isn't the correct response.

There is no such thing as a grouchy old person. The truth is that once you get old, you stop being polite and start being honest.

This is what we, who are aged 70 or 80 years plus, can look forward to.

This is something that happened at an assisted living center. The people who lived there had small apartments but they all ate at a central cafeteria. One morning one of the residents didn't show up for breakfast so my wife went upstairs and knocked on his door to see if everything was OK. She could hear him through the door and he said that he was running late and would be down shortly, so she went back to the dining area.



An hour later he still hadn't arrived, so she went back up towards his room but found him on the stairs. He was coming down the stairs but was having a hard time. He had a death grip on the hand rail and seemed to have trouble getting his legs to work right. She told him she was going to call an ambulance but he told her no, he wasn't in any pain and just wanted to have his breakfast. So, she helped him the rest of the way down the stairs and he had his breakfast. When he tried to return to his room, he was completely unable to get up even the first stair step, so they called an ambulance for him.

A couple of hours later she called the hospital to see how he was doing. The receptionist there said he was fine, he just had both of his legs in one side of his boxer shorts.

I'm sending this to my children so that they don't sell the house before they know all the facts.

