

Thanet And North Kent

Lymphoedema Support Group

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8th December 2019

Dear friends, Thank you to all who attended the meeting on 23rd November, we had a great turnout of 23 members.

A few updates from the meeting:

- **Speakers:** Denise Wilkes has offered to attend our March 2020 meeting having been unable to join us this year. In January we generally do not have a speaker and I will contact other suggested speakers for the remaining meetings for 2020. I had sent the 2020 dates to Anton Morgan Thorne the MacMillan Cancer Engagement Coordinator and also invited him to join us today if he wished, however I then had an email asking that representatives from all the groups that he has made contact with attend a full day meeting on 16th December in Ashford .Unfortunately I will not be able to attend this as it is so close to Christmas and also is a long drive and full day which is not ideal. I hope to get an update from Anton and then see if MacMillan can help the group in any way
- **Contacts and telephone calls** these have lessened but I still have people calling wanting an appointment with the clinic or wanting to speak to a Lymphoedema Specialist about hosiery , I direct then to the Appointment Hub
- **LSN- Lymphoedema Awareness wrist bands:** these are available to purchase. Please let her know if you would like one as we have a stock for members
- **Service update:** I have now confirmed with both Andree Hill-Tyler – Operational Lead for Lymphoedema and Denise Wilkes Head of Specialist Clinical Services that there is NOT a clinic at the Medway Maritime Hospital. The Medway clinic is still at Rainham Healthy Living Centre. One member who had recently experienced cellulitis spoke of

her concerns after an appointment at the QVMH Clinic. Her legs were not measured by a nurse and she was prescribed a repeat of the hosiery from her last appointment, despite the fact that following cellulitis her limb volume and measurements was likely to have changed. There was also a concern about clinical advice offered from a non-clinical member of staff. Hopefully Denise Wilkes can clear up concerns such as these when she attends the group. Following their experience sadly this member has now decided to access treatment privately.

- **Harmony Therapy Trust:** the charity was again mentioned and it seems many members are not aware of the trust which offers supportive, complimentary non-invasive therapies which have been approved by the NHS, to those living with and beyond Cancer. Usually 6 sessions are available free of charge following a medical referral. If you would like to find out more the contact details are: Tel: 01795 663050 Email: thtt2010@gmail.com Website: www.theharmonytherapytrust.com
I will contact The Harmony Trust to see if someone can come to a meeting in 2020 to tell us more
- **Advertising:** the 2020 posters and flyers were available and members took these to put up around the area. I have supplied the Lymphoedema and Podiatry Clinics at QVMH with both
- A member read us her excellent letter regarding NHS Services, that she had published in the Kentish Gazette

We welcomed Nicola Kidney and Amanda Mitchell to the group, they are both Exercise Referral Instructors with the Public Health Team at Medway Council but specialise in bone health and Mediation.

Nicola began with a True or False quiz on Osteoporosis facts, many of which surprised us all. 1 in 2 women over 50 and 1 in 5 men will have Osteoporosis, many will suffer hip fractures which can cause their death within a year of diagnosis! Osteoporosis is a silent disease causing no pain until a fracture occurs and fragility (low impact) fractures caused by a simple trip or fall from a standing height, can go unnoticed for many years. Common fracture sites are hips, wrists and spine. As we age bone mass is lost naturally, Osteopenia, but this condition does not have to turn into Osteoporosis if the speed is slowed by life style choices.

With Osteoporosis incidence on the increase we all need to take action to protect our own bodies and bone health from this debilitating condition.

Contributory factors to poor bone health and osteoporosis risk include: Smoking, lack of exercise (high impact is best) and Vitamin D deficiency - Department of Health advice is to take 10 -12 micro grams Vit D daily from October to March and increase foods that contain Calcium and Vit D in the diet (e.g. Fruit and vegetables, dairy, chick peas, lentils, tofu, dried apricots, nuts, oranges and oily fish) .Other risks include early Menopause, drinking alcohol in excess, Caffeine (Coca Cola is particularly bad for bone health) lack of sleep and stress and some medications so always check the information and be aware .

With exercise the advice is to remain as active as is possible, this is also helpful for lymphatic flow. Load bearing exercise is ideal, walking is excellent .Using resistance bands and hand weights is also helpful but do get advice .Nicola gave us a sheet showing some easy exercises using resistance bands and also gave bands to those wishing to try then at home . Try to reduce stress and get a good night's sleep to improve bone health and whole body physical and mental well-being.

Amanda then talked to us about simple meditation techniques based on seated yoga and mindfulness to help reduce blood pressure and stress, increasing cardio vascular health. She then took us through a seated mindfulness session when you bring yourself into the present and leave thoughts of the past and future behind. Relaxation is achieved by extending and being aware of your own breath to reduce heart rate and Amanda showed us different breathing techniques to help achieve this.

Everyone thanked Nicola and Amanda for a really informative and interactive session. They both stayed to answer members' individual questions and joined us for our celebration buffet lunch before taking a healthy walk back to Herne Bay station before the rain started! Both Nicola and Amanda have since told me how much they enjoyed coming to such a lovely group and would be happy to return should we want more information in the future.

The raffle raised £21 and there were some lovely Christmas themed prizes donated by members, thank you all for continuing to support the raffle and raise funds for our group

The celebration buffet was again a big success with lots of members staying to chat and catch up with one another, thank you all.

Meeting Dates: Saturdays from 10.00am to 12.30pm in the Function Room QVMH

Dates for 2020: Function Room confirmed with QVMH Properties:

January 25th

March 28th

May 30th

July 25th

September 26th

November 28th

All are the fourth Saturday of the month excepting May to avoid the Bank Holiday weekend

Wishing you all a Very Happy Christmas and a peaceful New Year

Take care everyone, please keep smiling ☺ and I look forward to catching up with you all again in the New Year, on 25th January 2020

With very best wishes

Sarah x

