

Buzz Bulletin

October 2024
Edition 10 Vol. 9

Newsletter of the
North Hampshire Prostate
Cancer Support Group



Chairman's Chat



Keith Jones
away and shops are filling up with goods to tempt us.

PSA Testing

First up this month, this has certainly become the hot topic ever since Sir Chris Hoy announced his cancer diagnosis and called for men to have greater access to a PSA test.



PSA tests are not routinely offered to men under 50 without symptoms but who may be at risk. Doctors are instead told to use their judgement which as we know for many men, this is a particular challenge.

Sir Chris told BBC Breakfast: "To me it seems a no-brainer. Why would they not reduce the age? Bring the age down and allow more men to go in and get a blood test."

DIARY DATES

Thursday 28th November
Group meeting
Health and Wellbeing - Steph
from our Exercise Class and
Alex from 5K My Way
Cancer Nurse Specialist will
also be in attendance
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**Thursday 5th December**  
**Christmas Lunch at BCOT**  
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Thursday 5th December
Red Lion Hotel, Basingstoke
Pub Pint and Chat
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**Thursday 7th December**  
**PC Awareness Day**  
**at Morrisons Supermarket**  
**Basingstoke**  
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Thursday 2nd January 2025
(TBC)
Red Lion Hotel, Basingstoke
Pub Pint and Chat
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**Thursday 30th January 2025**  
**Group meeting**  
**Heartburn**  
**Cancer UK**  
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Thursday 6th February 2025
Red Lion Hotel, Basingstoke
Pub Pint and Chat
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**Thursday 27th February 2025**  
**Group meeting**  
**TBA**

## Chairman's Chat .... continued

*Health Secretary Wes Streeting on the same programme told the BBC that Sir Chris makes a powerful argument. "That's why I've asked the NHS to look at the case for lowering the age." "It's obviously got to be evidence-led, clinically-led decisions," he said.*

*NHS guidelines for England say anyone can request a PSA test if they are over the age of 50. And men of any age who have symptoms can also ask for one.*

*Routine PSA testing or screening is not offered on the NHS, because experts say the test is not accurate enough on its own to rule in or out cancer reliably. Doctors are looking at whether adding in MRI scans to PSA tests might improve the situation.*

*The charity Prostate Cancer UK backs the call, saying doing more checks could potentially save thousands of lives each year.*

*Spokeswoman Chiara De Biase said: "One in eight men will get prostate cancer, but there's currently no screening programme for the disease.*

*"If your dad or brother has had prostate cancer, or you're black, you have the highest risk of getting the disease, and we strongly recommend you talk to your GP about testing from 45.*

*"Right now, you need to be aware of this and bring it up with a GP yourself. As prostate cancer often has no symptoms in its earlier stages this is leading to too many men getting a late, incurable diagnosis - like Sir Chris."*

*Of course, currently not everyone is in agreement that PSA testing is the way forward as indicated in the quote from Cancer Research UK.*

*Cancer Research UK says the evidence so far suggests that routinely screening people using PSA would not greatly help prevent deaths and might instead lead to men having unnecessary treatment that could cause undue stress and potential side effects.*

*PSA is not diagnostic. A raised PSA level does not necessarily mean there is cancer. It can be elevated with other conditions too, such as inflammation.*

*If you ask for a PSA test, your doctor may advise you to think carefully about the benefits and disadvantages.*

*Source BBC News*

*This is why it is so important that research continues into how a screening programme can be established and that NHS guidelines to GP's are reviewed so that it will ensure that more men's lives can be saved in the future.*

*If you missed the BBC programme on Chris Hoy, you can watch the interview from the link below*

*[Sir Chris Hoy: Finding Hope - BBC iPlayer](#)*



## Chairman's Chat .... continued

In related news, Allan Roper our Secretary featured in articles in the Daily Mail and the Daily Express in October related to the campaign to update the guidelines provided to GP's



Source Daily Mail – 14/10/2024

Allan Roper (right) worries about son Adrian's (left) risk of prostate cancer (Image: Allan Roper)

Allowing GPs to discuss a PSA test would be a huge step in the right direction.

Allan Roper, 73, was successfully treated for prostate cancer but fears his son is at risk. The grandfather-of-two said: "My dad had prostate cancer, so I knew I had a higher chance of getting it myself."

"When I was diagnosed, I was offered a standard biopsy or a place on a trial where I could have an MRI scan and the new trans-perineal biopsy."

"I chose the trial and that saved my life; the standard biopsy showed no cancer, but the scan and new type of biopsy found I did have cancer."

Retired health and safety manager Allan's cancer was caught early in 2014 and treated, leaving him cancer-free for the last six years.

Source Daily Express – 14/10/2024



## Partners Group

Just a notice that the partners group will be taking a break from their meeting at the Gaberdine Bar in Basingstoke. The group will next meet in January although there will be a break out session at our November meeting.

Speaking of partners, the National Prostate Cancer Partners Support Group meet on Zoom on alternate months. The meetings start at 6:30 and are open to all partners. The next dates are:

Monday 16<sup>th</sup> December

For Zoom details, contact either [carolineOPCSG@gmail.com](mailto:carolineOPCSG@gmail.com) or [janetldaykin@gmail.com](mailto:janetldaykin@gmail.com).

## Mayor's Charity Events

On Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> October we attended the Mayor's Variety Show at the Anvil where we will be assisted with distributing programs, drinks and collecting donations as well as having our publicity banners and materials.

Finally, as we get to the end of the year, there is the Mayor's Christmas Carol Service at All Saints Church in Basingstoke on Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> December at 6pm. Although the event is free to attend, unfortunately I have been made aware that all tickets have now been taken up.

## Awareness Events

We had our big awareness event at The Malls on Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> October. Thank you to all who gave up some of their Saturday to help out, your efforts were very much appreciated.

We now have our final awareness event of the year in planning and again we need your help. Through our contact with the Mayor's Co-ordinator, we have been able to have a day allocated in Morrison's supermarket in Basingstoke. The date is Saturday the 7<sup>th</sup> December and the good news is that we will be inside the store, not stood outside exposed to the elements.

If you are able to spare one or two hours to help us out at this event, it would be greatly appreciated, just let Richard White or Allan Roper know through the email [info@nhpcsg.org.uk](mailto:info@nhpcsg.org.uk) or directly to Richard whose contact details follow his report on the November group meeting in this newsletter.

## Prostate Cancer UK (PCUK) News

PCUK want to get the views of 1000 men on what the shape of future support should be. This is a very short survey with a further follow-up. In addition to helping PCUK, there is the opportunity to win a £25 Amazon voucher in a draw for those who complete the survey. As of this week, over 600 had had taken part but PCUK want to get to the 1000 target, so if you have a few minutes, please follow the link below.

[1000 Men Project Survey](#)

# Buzz Bulletin



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## Chairman's Chat .... *continued*

### Other Support Groups

#### Living Well with Advanced Prostate Cancer Virtual Support Group

The final Zoom meeting of the year for this group will be on Monday 25<sup>th</sup> November at 6:30 with access available from 6.00pm. Please email [aidan.adkins@tackleprostate.org](mailto:aidan.adkins@tackleprostate.org) if you wish to attend.

#### Newbury Prostate Cancer Support Group

This is a new group that is starting up and Allan Roper and myself attended their meeting in October to provide guidance and answer questions based on our experiences in the North Hants group. We were again able to welcome representatives of their group to our October meeting.

### Christmas Notice

Finally, an update for our Christmas lunch event. We are returning to BCoT once again on Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> December at 12 noon. As of the October group meeting, the last remaining places were taken up but if anyone wishes to be added to a wait list, please let Allan know on [info@nhpcsg.org.uk](mailto:info@nhpcsg.org.uk) in case there are any cancellations. Prices have been held at last years level, namely £22 for 2 course and £25 for 3 courses.

Hopefully by now, everyone attending has made Virginia Budd aware of your menu choices, if not look out for an email from Virginia. Also, if anyone attending has not paid at this time, we would appreciate that they make a transfer as soon as possible into our bank account. If you do not have our bank account details, please contact us through the [info@nhpcsg.org.uk](mailto:info@nhpcsg.org.uk) email address and we will provide them.

Well, that is all for me this month, I hope to see you all at the November meeting.

**Keith Jones**  
Chair

NHPCSG, a chosen charity of the Mayor of Basingstoke and Deane.

### Group Meetings

Brighton Hill Community  
Association Hall  
Gershwin Court  
Basingstoke.  
RG22 4NN

Meetings are held on the last Thursday  
of every month except December



  
**Together we are Stronger**

### Contact

#### For more information

call or text: 07377 430242

email : [info@nhpcsg.org.uk](mailto:info@nhpcsg.org.uk)

website: [www.nhpcsg.org.uk](http://www.nhpcsg.org.uk)



North Hampshire Prostate Cancer  
Support Group



## Meeting Report 31 October 2024



The Mayor Councillor Dan Putty said a few words of introduction: He has been a councillor since 1995 and is strongly focussed on local voluntary trusts and charities and has chosen NHPCSG is one of the his charities for 2024-25.

The renowned and respected Professor Langley gave an interesting and surprisingly entertaining presentation entitled "Can PSA Screening and Prostate Brachytherapy Extend Your Life"

His sources for information included Public Health England, NICE, the Lancet and of course the Daily Mail.

He started with a brief history of the PSA

test, from the discovery of Prostate Specific Antigens by American forensic scientists in the 1980s.

The goal is to detect Prostate Cancer early to allow for treatment before it spreads, unfortunately there are no symptoms of early symptoms and unlike Breast Cancer self-examination is not possible.

The best option we have currently is the PSA blood test, but it is not tumour specific, it cannot differentiate between a Pussycat or a Tiger cancer.

In 2005 the NHS guidelines to GPs was that any man over 50 can ask for a PSA test, but Public Health England's Prostate Cancer Risk Management Advice shockingly states that GP's should NOT raise the prospect of Prostate Cancer with candidate men who men who visit them for other reasons.

So why are we not screening?

There have been some historical clinical trial in Europe and the USA but the results have been maligned due to sample size and contamination. There have also been well publicised fears regarding the risk of over diagnosis and subsequent over-treatment affecting the patient's quality of life. But now we have the MRI scan as part of the treatment path to further screen a patient prior to a biopsy (Transperineal nowadays, far safer than the old school Transrectal).

## Meeting Report .... *continued*

We are relying on men being proactive and asking their GPs for a PSA test, there are local situations (like the Lions PSA testing) and celebrity sufferers who will cause an influx of testing requests, but it is still not a targeted screening program.

That is what the Transform program will demonstrate the need for. With targeted prostate health checks aimed at men on active GP Databases to invite them for a test rather than waiting for them to ask.

After the testing comes the treatment and there we have to be a balance the treatment side effects against the patient lifestyle impacts and longevity.

Brachytherapy vs Beam Radiotherapy vs Radical Prostatectomy, all have their side effects that can affect every man to different degrees. The treatment paths can be varied; the number of days hospital stay, the number of clinic visits for treatment, the additional hormone therapy drugs that may or may not be needed, all have to be considered for each patient.

**Richard White**

[whiri02@gmail.com](mailto:whiri02@gmail.com)

07768 904231



## North Hampshire Prostate Support Group

### Goes Flying



Well not literally, but with the inspirational talk by Lucy Butcher, the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Air Ambulance Engagement Support officer, all who visited from the group got off to a flying start, just like the little helicopter that is a growing sight in our skies. What most did not realize was that the Charity also runs a fleet of 4 fast

response well equipped cars, which are often used in preference to the helicopter, which needs an area the size of a tennis court for a landing pad. In addition, the space in the helicopter is very compact, thereby limiting the scope of working on critical patients. Again, landing on a motorway is never ideal. Similarly, if the cloud base is below 500 feet then they are not permitted to fly, and a ground response becomes essential.

The charity receives no funding from Government, but instead receives its funds typically from community events, legacies and trust funds, generating last year just over £10M. This may sound a lot, but when compared to the cost of a lift off at £3500 each time, with on average 5 lifts a day – with one day recently involving 13, the need for us the public to be generous in our



## Visit Report .... *continued*

support becomes very clear. Some of this funding also provides for a support team caring for those who have witnessed traumatic events in which the team has been involved.

Lucy went on to outline the call-out process. The service is closely linked to South Central Ambulance service, where two of the team sit in on all of the typically 3000 calls for an ambulance that service receives each day. One of these is a senior doctor, the other a despatcher, with often the doctor using their experience and intuition to gauge whether to go live. The medical team, currently based at Thruxton Airfield, consist of a pilot – normally ex-military, a senior doctor, often of consultant level, and two highly trained paramedics. On receipt of a radio call to 'Go', they will spend a few minutes initially planning their response, including of course identifying suitable landing sites.



It is once on site that the extensive training kicks in, the operations centre has a special room set up to provide training for a wide range of different situations, and teams spend most of their time when not out on call honing their skills. Unlike normal ambulance crews, the Air Ambulance teams can administer coma inducing drugs should this be required, the aim always being to first stabilise the patient, before transport and where appropriate delivery direct to a well-equipped hospital operating theatre

for the next stage of their treatment. Understandably there are times when stabilisation is not enough, and both amputations and even open-heart surgery has had to be done in the field, this being possible due to the high level of the medical staff in the team, all of whom are paid by the charity. However, despite all of the training, there will also be scope for the unexpected, as a recent landing in a farmer's field demonstrated when the resident bull perhaps perceived the helicopter as competition for his mistresses and charged, fortunately damage was minimal.

For more information contact: -

Hampshire Isle of Wight Air Ambulance Lucy Butcher  
[lucy@HIOWAA.ORG](mailto:lucy@HIOWAA.ORG)

