

Warrington

MIScellany

January 2011

I'm going to take some time today to talk about an issue which probably affects me more immediately than it will do most of you, but I thought you might be interested to hear about something that's been in the news so often.

As many of you will be aware, the government has introduced a series of cuts, and the one which of course will affect me the most are the university cuts. At the moment, all English students pay just over £3000 as tuition fees to their university, which in most cases they do with help from student finance; the student loan company, which loans the money at a low interest rate, which correlates approximately with inflation. The amount which universities can charge is "capped". However, the actually tuition costs a lot more than this, and so the government covers the rest of the cost. Some people are against the government paying

any money at all towards student education, and believe that students should pay it themselves, because not everybody gets the opportunity to go to university, or indeed chooses to.

In this issue

| | |
|---------------|--------------------------------|
| Page 1-3..... | Editorial |
| Page 3..... | Birthdays |
| Page 4..... | 100+ club |
| Page 5..... | Tablets for MS |
| Page 6-7..... | DLA cuts |
| Page 8..... | Support Group |
| Page 9..... | Fight on benefits MBE award |
| Page 10..... | Christmas party |
| Page 11..... | Membership news |
| Page 12..... | Exec Committee |

.....
Sam King, 45 Denbury Avenue, Stockton Heath. WA4 2BW Tel 860630
.....

However, the fact is that taxes have always gone and will always go towards causes which not all of the population will benefit from; that does not mean that the cause is wrong. Also, funding university educations is an investment in the future. Everyone knows that the amount of industry and actual physical goods being manufactured in England is always decreasing. Instead, more and more of the country's Gross Domestic Product are non-material; our major exports tend to be the products of intellects and skills. This is essential for a highly developed country like England, but without good university education being available to everyone, this would be impossible. Therefore, investing in university educations is a way of investing in the future success of the country, which benefits everyone.

The government higher education cuts mean that the universities will now receive a meagre fraction of the amount of funding per student which they were receiving before the cuts. To allow the universities to continue to be financially viable, the government has had to raise the tuition fees cap from just over £3000 per year, to £9000 per year. This raise in tuition fees will affect any

student entering higher education in September 2012, or after. Currently, it is estimated that living costs for a student living in a university town or city are approximately £6500, with those in London being considerably higher. This tends to be at the lower end of reality, which is often more. Therefore on average, a student will incur debts of about £10,000 per year. So for standard 3 year courses, this results in a debt of about £30,000, before they have even begun earning. And for a six year course like medicine, the debt is double that. However, with the rise in fees, students from 3 year courses can expect debts of nearly £50,000, and students on courses like medicine will have debts often into six figures.

As well as causing these huge debts, the government has also suggested that student loans have more "commercial" rates of interest, so not only will the initial sum be greater, it will also rise more quickly.

This will, of course, result in school leavers (particularly those from more affluent backgrounds) being less likely to choose to enter higher education. This will often result in them missing out on opportunities which they

would otherwise have had, were it not for the financial barriers in place. This has left university tutors worrying that they will have fewer students to pick from, and may have to pick students who are less suited to their course, simply because they are the only ones able to afford the greatly increased fees. Some universities, particularly the newer ones, will be forced to close due to a lack of demand for places, and an inability to cover their costs using their tuition fees. Nick Clegg promised voters in his manifesto that he would vote against any motions to increase tuition fees.

However, because the Liberal Democrats formed a coalition, and a not ruling outright, they are no longer tied to the terms of their party manifesto, and were able to do the exact opposite - vote with the Conservatives to pass the motion of increased fees. This has left many student voters for the Liberal Democrats feeling undermined, when their biggest reason for voting is so easily betrayed.

Sam King

Data Protection Act

There are still about 60 of the data protection act pro forma that have not been returned. After our AM on 8 March the forms that have not been returned will be treated as withholding permission.

An indirect result of these changes was that Mary Burke was omitted from December's birthdays so a belated happy birthday for December 18. I'll make sure your there this year.

For the members that haven't yet returned time is running out.



Our congratulations to:-

| | |
|-----------------|--------|
| Jennifer CAIN | 06.Feb |
| Karen DANIELS | 06.Feb |
| Lorraine MORRIS | 17.Feb |
| John TIPPING | 24.Feb |
| Nicola BROSTER | 25.Feb |
| Jayne DOLPHIN | 09.Mar |
| Adelaide HOUGH | 25.Mar |
| Sandra CURLEY | 26.Mar |
| Stephen J BERRY | 03.Apr |

Listening Ear - Margret Hughes - 01925 723917

100+Club



There are 108 members if you're not one of them please consider joining contact Chris Janovitz on 723564. Remember the more people join the higher the prizes go don't delay.

5th December 2010
Members 108

| Prize | Num | Name |
|-------|-----|-----------------|
| 1st | 100 | Janet Wrenshall |
| 2nd | 096 | Carol Hill |
| 3rd | 066 | W Dooley |
| 4th | 051 | Joy Carter |
| | 053 | Marnie Hampson |
| | 005 | Margaret Wilmot |
| | 083 | Jayne Woods |
| | 028 | Catherine Tate |

The amounts were £109.00, £59.00, £33.00 and 5 at £10 respectively

10th January 2011
Members 108

| Prize | Num | Name |
|-------|-----|----------------|
| 1st | 024 | Dorothy Lewis |
| 2nd | 056 | G Atkinson |
| 3rd | 019 | Liz Spensley |
| 4th | 017 | K Daniels |
| | 109 | S Burns |
| | 067 | J Dolphin |
| | 038 | Kath McQuillan |
| | 107 | Esther Thomas |

The amounts were £109.00, £59.00, £33.00 and 5 at £10 respectively

The winner of the Christmas bonus prize was
number 076 John Paice

Warrington Disability Partnership (WDP)

We now provide Service, Repairs and Maintenance of scooters and other mobility products, we will collect and return your equipment and loan a replacement if needed
Free of Charge

For more information Tel: 01925 240064

——Mixed opinions on two MS tablets——

Today, Europe's Committee for Medicinal Products for Human Use (CHMP) – a regulatory body of the licensing process for new treatments – has released opinions on two MS tablets.

In 2010 over 1000 people with MS completed our survey on the potential use of tablets; 95% of them said, if given a choice, they'd choose a pill over injectable or infusible drugs.

Here's what the committee decided today...

Cladribine The committee gave a 'negative opinion' for the second time on the treatment. The owners of the drug, Merck, originally submitted it for licensing in July 2009, but the panel reported back in September that more evidence was needed.

Today's decision will mean Merck now has to gain further evidence on the treatment's safety and effectiveness before it can be re-submitted for approval.

The treatment has already been licensed for people with relapsing forms of MS in Australia and Russia, but the European committee ruled further work was needed.

Fingolimod The committee gave a 'positive opinion' for fingolimod (now known as Gileyna) to treat people with highly active relapsing-remitting MS.

This decision means the treatment has met all the necessary regulatory requirements so far and is now one step closer to being licensed in the UK; all being well, it could be available later this year.

The treatment has already been licensed for people with relapsing remitting MS in the USA.

.....
<http://warringtonms.org.uk>
.....

DLA Cuts in Care Homes

The MS Society has joined 27 leading disability charities to launch a report calling on the Government to reconsider its plans to stop vital mobility payments to people in residential care, which will impact an estimated 80,000 people.

The 'Don't limit mobility' report, submitted to MPs today, argues that the government is wrong to say that the Disability Living Allowance (DLA) mobility component given to people in residential care homes is an 'overlap of public funds'. The report, co-authored by 27 charities including the MS Society, Mencap, Parkinson's UK and Mind, found that none of the residential care providers surveyed currently receive a contribution from local authorities towards the cost of personal mobility costs.

A further survey of residential care home users revealed that over 50% gave either the majority or their entire DLA mobility component to their care home. Of these, 40% said that it paid for a Motability car and 21% said the money paid for petrol for staff to take them out. One respondent urged the government to listen to the people that will be most affected by the cut to DLA, saying: "I would ask you to come and see us and see what it is like to live the life we have. Then see how it feels to have your independence taken away and not have any social interaction."

The charities are now strongly urging the government to reconsider the proposal to remove the mobility component of DLA.



MS Nurse Clinic

From Walton Centre

Helen Leggett

0781 331 6314

Woolston Clinic

2nd Monday of the month

2 PM

What does the MS Society think?


Laura Weir, Head of Policy and Campaigns at the MS Society, said: "The negative impact of introducing this change would be devastating for thousands of people in care homes, in stark

comparison to the limited savings it would achieve for the Government. In the best case scenario, this proposal will simply shift the cost of basic transport needs from the national welfare purse to already over-stretched local authorities. In the worst, it simply means that tens of thousands of the most vulnerable people will be denied a vital slice of independence and left feeling trapped in their care homes."

Outings & Events

Support Your Branch

Monthly Socials



What can you do?

- 1 Find out more about our campaign on this issue
- 2 Write to Ian Duncan Smith to ask him to accept the recommendations in the report and reverse his decision to cut the mobility component of DLA for people in residential care. Download our letter (21 kb) and send it to secretaryofstate@dwp.gsi.gov.uk or The Rt Hon Iain Duncan Smith MP, House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA.
- 3 Read our letter to Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, Ian Duncan Smith



| Forthcoming Events | |
|----------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| 8th February | Social St Josephs Club Penketh 7:30 pm |
| 8th March | AM St Josephs Club Penketh 7:30 pm |
| 31st March | Bellevue dog racing contact Peter Travers |
| Requests for transport - Jeff Richards 07738609018 | |

MS Support Group

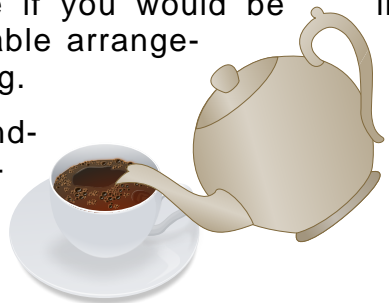
You may recall from the December Newsletter that I was hoping to set-up a drop-in meeting place for people with MS to get together and discuss the illness and how it is affecting our lives. When I was initially diagnosed with MS (by myself admittedly!) there was very little support available, as the internet was still rather in its infancy for the general public.

The amount of information available to us on the internet today is outstanding, though whilst we can chat away with people all over the world about whatever it is that concerns us it in no way replaces the benefit of people actually meeting up to discuss a common subject.

I am pleased to be able to report that initial interest in this group is now sufficient for me to get the ball rolling. The venue will be at the Warrington Disability Partnership in Beaufort Street, though an actual date has yet to be fixed due to conflicting priorities of those who wish to attend.

I had originally planned that the group would be of a drop-in nature but have been convinced by those more knowledgeable than myself that it would be more feasible to set the group up by invitation. This is not as exclusive as it sounds; it merely needs you to contact me if you would be interested in attending so that suitable arrangements can be made for the meeting.

If you would be interested in attending our first session, please contact me on 07734 952392 or at anwilton@hotmail.com.



MS Helpline Freephone
0808 800 8000

— MS Society Leads Fight on Benefits —

The MS Society has been selected to lead on a review of benefits assessments for ESA and give advice on what changes should be made in order for people with fluctuating conditions to be more fairly assessed.

Chief Executive of the Society, Simon Gillespie, will chair a small group of experts from four disability organisations to develop recommendations to make the system fairer. Last year 2000 of you shared your experience of the benefits system in our big benefits survey, and now the group will use your views and experiences to inform improvements.

The group will report to Professor Harrington at the end of April, whose influential report called for extensive reforms to the Work Capability Assessment (WCA).

MS Society 13 Jan 2011

— Branch Supporter Awarded MBE —

James O'Connor known to us as Jim has received an MBE in the New Year's Honours list for his work in the Warrington community. Apart from helping our branch and his role with St John's Ambulance Jim is also a Warrington Lion. Congratulations Jim from all of us and we look forward to the photographs on the day of the presentation.

— Donations in Lieu of Christmas Cards —

Liz & Roger Spensley
Roger & Stephanie Atherton
Pat & Peter Ordish
Rita & Keith Daly
Betty Taylor
Ann & Les Bayliss
Chris & Chris Askew
Julia & Mandy Wilton
Chris & Helen Janovitz

Margret & Jim Wilmot
Zena & Peter Mowbray
Jane Avery
Peter Travers
John & Mary Burke
Rita & Paul Harrison
Jayne Dolphin &
Charlie Dooley

Branch Christmas Party

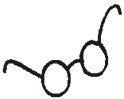
Held at Paddington House on the 5th December and attended by about 80 members of the branch a most enjoyable afternoon. There was discussion as to whether the vegetables were 'al dente' or had the chef just not cooked them long enough, but I have let the hotel know about this. We were entertained by a professional singer Heather.

The Hundred +club Christmas bonus prize £109 was collected by number 76 John Paice and you can tell by photographs below how happy Liz and Roger were to collect the free draw of £15 or a litre of spirits and Margaret and Jim for the consolation prize £10 in the hundred +club draw.



More pictures will be placed on our website which is presently being revamped. This year we are hoping to hold the event on Sunday, 11 December.

WANTED



Spare Spectacles
Contact Susan Atkinson
Tel 727612

Used Postage Stamps
Odd Balls of Wool
Contact Susan Atkinson
Tel. 727612



Dave Hinde Travel Services



D.H.T.S.

Disabled Travel

14 Seater Mini buses Service

Tel. 01744 615851

Mobile 07887 615040

Parcel delivery service. Accounts

Membership News

Unfortunately since the last newsletter there has been three deaths Marie Longworth died earlier in 2010 but we weren't made aware of this until December and also Norma Broe died in December but we were not informed until January and Ian Timms died on 3 January 2011 and his funeral on 12 January was attended by Margaret Wilmot, Dorothy and Susan Atkinson. Our thoughts are with friends and family.

Those of you with a keen eye will have noticed that our AGM has been renamed to AM this is to comply with instructions from headquarters. It is only the name that changed the procedure will be the same as always. For anybody that hasn't yet visited the premises that we hold our socials perhaps the AM would be a good occasion to try, very pleasant surroundings.

Fundraising

Hello Everyone, Now the festive season is over it is time for our Fundraising Team to look at events for the year.

If anyone has any ideas for future events or would like to join the team then please let us know, we always welcome new ideas.

The Christmas dinner at the Paddington House was good and the money raised on the raffle was £150.00 and the money raised in lieu of Christmas cards was £59.60.

We also received £23.60 from a collection box at a local Hairdressers in Great Sankey.

We have had some disappointing news, we had planned a Cabaret evening at Woolston Legion on the 25th March 2011, but unfortunately I have received a telephone call to say that the Band has been double booked and they cannot attend our function. Therefore we have had no option but to cancel this event and will rearrange it later in the year. As soon as we have a confirmed list of dates for the year we will let you all know.

Julie Richards

Executive Committee April 2010

Branch Officers

| | | |
|-----------------|------------------------|--------------|
| Chair | Mr Paul Harrison..... | 01606 892151 |
| Secretary | Mrs Elaine Magill..... | 637120 |
| Treasurer | Mr John Burke | 824041 |
| Support Officer | Mrs Dorothy Lewis..... | 268820 |

Committee Members

| | | |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------|
| Fundraising | Mrs Julie Richards..... | 573980 |
| Joint Equipment/ Transport | Mr Jim O'Connor..... | 451472 |
| Web/DTP | Mr Jeff Richards..... | 07738609018 |
| Social | Mr Chris Janovitz..... | 723564 |
| Everybody's Help | Mrs Rita Harrison..... | 01606 892151 |
| Activities | Mrs Suzan Rainford..... | 602719 |
| Editor | Mrs Margaret Wilmot..... | 755017 |
| Subscriptions | Mr Sam King..... | 860630 |
| Everybody's Help | Mr Peter Travers..... | 492970 |
| Everybody's Help | Mrs Mary Burke..... | 824041 |
| Co-opted | Charles Dooley..... | 860112 |
| | Amanda Wilton..... | 726758 |

This newsletter is published by The Warrington and District branch of the Multiple Sclerosis Society. We give regular updates about MS and what is happening locally in the MS community.

Editor: Sam King
Layout Chris Janovitz

All views expressed in the publication are individual and not necessarily the view or policy of the charity and its supporters.

Charity number 1139257