

# PHAROS

*A beacon of hope in the darkness*

*Newsletter of the Reading Prostate Cancer Support Group (RPCSG)*

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*Website: [www.rpcsg.org.uk](http://www.rpcsg.org.uk)*

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## THE AUGUST MEETING.

Our August RPCSG meeting was held using Zoom with the guest speaker being Natalie Holmes of the NHS organisation Talking Therapies.

I missed this meeting due to being on holiday in Wales, and am very grateful to Beverley for writing the following account of Natalie's presentation:

Natalie introduced herself as a member of Talking Therapy team particularly within the Cognitive Behavioural therapy team working up from a trainee to leading the Newbury team over the last 10 years working particularly with clients suffering with Long Term Conditions.

She introduced the service which is a free NHS service offering support to anyone over the age of 17 years across Berkshire. There are 300 therapists working throughout the County. They are made up of Cognitive Behavioural therapists (CBT), Psychological wellbeing practitioners, Counsellors, Employment Advisors, Wellbeing support workers and an administrative support team. They help adults over 17 years of age with mild to moderate mental health issues such as depression, anxiety, sleep difficulties, medical unexplained symptoms and long term health conditions such as diabetes, heart disease and chronic lung problems. They may work with GP's to ensure there are no reasons for the issues due to reactions to medications (all with client permission). Natalie works 2 days a week in a GP surgery getting referrals directly from the GP. This is especially useful for those with long term medical issues.

They use therapies such as Cognitive Behavioural therapy (CBT) using the 'here and now' looking at ways to recognise unhelpful thinking and looking at how these can be changed. They also have counsellors working with those who are depressed using a variety of protocols and specifically working with those transitioning from one role to another e.g. moving from a worker to retirement.

Therapy is given in a variety of ways although all face to face meetings are not carried out at the present time. Telephone or video sessions are offered or there is the opportunity to work in virtual groups. There are some pre-recorded workshops working specifically with stress levels (StressLess). These can be uploaded and watched in a clients' own time. They also have a Silvercloud Online Support which is an online CBT programme of 4 pre recorded sessions working with those who have stress, anxiety or sleep difficulties. Again, these can be watched at the clients' convenience. The Silver Cloud programme has the best success rate. They use questionnaires throughout the process to monitor how clients are improving and also use these to analyse results according to original diagnosis eg cancer patients or other reasons. These are all anonymised to protect client confidentiality. It also helps to drive government policy. Natalie commented as part of a question that they like clients to present at the beginning of their journey as they are able to work more effectively than part way through but they suggest that clients use the hospital services when still being seen regularly as it can be difficult to combine 2 different coping styles and clients don't have the time to work on both.

Within 5 days of referral clients will be booked into a Wellbeing assessment to see what their issues are and then discuss treatment options and goals.

Over the last few months they have been busy especially with those feeling lonely so have been working on making connexions with each other. They also have an Employment Service helping those looking for work, dealing with challenges within work and those returning to work following illness and a Wellbeing Service dealing with housing, financial difficulties, alcohol and substance misuse, gambling, exercise and healthy eating.

Referrals can be made by any one over 17 years old either for themselves or for someone else not able to complete the referral independently. Referral can be made through email, telephone, the GP or any other Health Professional.

Following the talk there were a variety of questions. Some answers have been added into the main body of the talk. She was asked about how the service fitted into the wider mental health service. Natalie explained that there are 5 steps within the Mental Health Service with the GP being level 1, Talking Therapy's level 2-3, the Mental Health Team level 4 and inpatient treatment as level 5. Talking Therapies can refer up to the other levels directly which helps to create a seamless referral system within the wider team so clients don't get left with no support. At the moment, NHS staff and carers are being prioritised for help following the difficulties they have faced over the last few months.

There is also a group of Councillors working specifically with Post Traumatic Stress Team and again, Talking Therapy councillors have direct access to them too. The teams have been working with GP's, Consultants and other health professionals to teach them how to deal with patients coming in with mental health issues making sure they know what questions to ask in order to get the necessary information to move forward.

The programme is an NHS based programme and there are centres in all the Counties. They carry out combined training with Berkshire especially working with Oxfordshire and Milton Keynes and use social media to 'advertise' their existence and promote mind health.

One member had used the service and recommended their service and the self referral system was well received by members as it makes the service very accessible.

The meeting finished with thanks to Natalie for a very informative talk.

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### **NEXT RPCSG ZOOM MEETING - 4th September 2020**

The next RPCSG Zoom meeting will be held on Friday 4th September 2020 when the guest speaker will be Mr Paul Hadway, a consultant at the Royal Berkshire Hospital. Mr Hadway's specialisation is erectile dysfunction and his talk will include the causes and remedies for erectile dysfunction. This will be a particularly interesting talk as many of our members will have suffered or are still suffering from erectile dysfunction.

## RPCSG SEPTEMBER WALK

The September walk will be on Tuesday 1st September and will be a repeat of a previous walk that was very popular, from Pangbourne to Goring and then a short railway journey back to Pangbourne.

We have done this walk previously but this time we will go on a different route, through a pine forest. We will have to observe social distancing rules so please bring your own refreshments for a refreshment stop along the way.

You can park in either of two car parks in Pangbourne. Driving through Pangbourne turn off the A329 into Whitchurch Road (B 471) and the first car park is about 200 yards on the left. There is a second car park about 100 yards further along, on the right. Both car parks are before the Whitchurch toll bridge and cost £2.50 for 8 hours. The post code RG8 7BS will take you close to the first carpark.

The walk will start at 10:45 a.m. at the first car park and will be about 4½ miles. If you have any queries about the walk please call Richard on 07973 662925.

### Previous walk.

We had an enjoyable walk in August starting in Ramsbury with 11 people taking part. The weather was perfect and we visited a Roman mosaic where there was a refreshment stop, this was near to Littlecote House. Some photographs along the way:



At the Roman Mosaic



Refreshment stop near to the mosaic

## COFFEE MEETINGS

A coffee morning in September is being arranged. I will email details to all members later.

The August coffee meeting was held at the Flower Pot in Aston. It was an enjoyable occasion held outdoors with social distancing and fortunately the weather was perfect. There were 13 of our members joining in. The arrangement of benches in the garden of the Flower Pot is particularly suitable for our meeting.

Photographs taken in the garden of The Flower Pot:



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## HELP AND CONSULTATIONS

Several of our members have said that they are uncertain of how to contact the Royal Berkshire Hospital for help, information and consultations. In this section I describe the sources of help and information that are available to you following a diagnosis and then during and after treatment.

The path to diagnosis and treatment usually starts with your GP referring you to the RBH for investigation. If your diagnosis finds that you have prostate cancer you will then be under the care of the RBH. A series of events take place that will include tests, scans and consultations at which you will be able to ask any questions, raise any concerns and request any information that you need. After your primary treatment there will be follow-up meetings at which you will again be able to ask any questions.

You may have questions or concerns during this journey and in between consultations. In these cases you can call the urology nurses at the RBH. The call will be answered by the highly qualified and experienced urology nurses who will offer help and can arrange hospital visits or consultations if necessary. The telephone number for RBH patients is included in the information pack that was given to you upon diagnosis; if you no longer have this number then RPCSG members can obtain it through the support telephone number below.

Eventually you will be discharged from the care of the hospital and back into the care of your GP. You can then contact your GP if you have any queries. However for a period of time after your discharge, in the region of one year, you can again call the urology nurses for assistance.

The RPCSG can also help you at any time whilst you are a member of the group. There are two ways of contacting us:

- We have a telephone number **0118 357 0482** that will be answered by an RPCSG support member. They can supply help and information based on the collective experience of the support team and the experience of members in a similar situation as you. They cannot give direct medical advice on your particular situation as medical decisions on such matters as choice of treatment must be made by you in conjunction with RBH consultants.
- There is an email address that will be monitored and responded to by the support team and specialist nurse Beverley. Just send an email to [rpcsgmedical@outlook.com](mailto:rpcsgmedical@outlook.com)

Please do not hesitate to use either of the above routes if you have any questions or concerns.



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*This newsletter may refer to named providers and their products or services, and such reference expresses no inference upon any aspect of any provider's business, services or products, and expresses no recommendation or preference for any such products or services.*

**DATES FOR YOUR DIARY.**

**Tuesday 1st September 2020** will be a walk from Pangbourne to Goring.

**Friday 4th September 2020** will be a Zoom group meeting with guest speaker Mr Paul Hadway talking about erectile dysfunction.