

Our PHILOSOPHY

The Branch has been established since 1972. Our purpose is to support people with Parkinson's (PwPs) in Edinburgh and the Lothians by providing opportunities to meet and share experiences, organising a wide variety of beneficial activities, disseminating helpful information, and engendering a sense of community. We recognise the condition impacts people's lives in an individual manner and that we all have our preferences for things we like doing, as well as individual lifestyles. *Monthly Branch Meetings* bring Members together to listen to well-informed speakers on aspects of the condition, lifestyle issues and non-PD topics of interest. Our *Edinburgh Research Interest Group (ERIG)* organises meetings covering medical developments. Branch *participatory activities* focus on exercise, creativity and mutual support for PwPs and care-partners. Our *annual gatherings* bring people together at Christmas, mid-summer and for a variety of fun events. We keep Members informed through our *Branch Newsletter* (printed approximately quarterly), the *ERIG Newsletter*, special postal mailings and emails, and most up-to-date of all, our website, www.edinburghparkinsons.org.

To find out specific details about location, dates, times and the relevant contact for any of the activities in this document please consult the Branch Calendar, the Branch website, or if you do not have access to either of these, please contact our Hon Secretary, Liz Hume, 07594 481175.

What YOU Can Do

We encourage you to familiarise yourself with the activities we have to offer and to give some of them a try; for those involving exercise, care-partners can usually also attend. Our facilitators are skilled in working with PwPs and take into account the needs of the individual. None of the activities require prior experience. We also encourage you to consider whether you have a skill or expertise that might be helpful to us in a volunteer capacity. Research shows volunteering itself can prove highly beneficial for an individual. Almost half our regular volunteers have Parkinson's, others may have or have had partners or other family members with the condition.

Regular SUPPORT Opportunities



We run a **Carers Support Group** for Edinburgh based care-partners on the *last Wednesday of every month* in the Pollock Pavilion, Ferry Road. This provides an opportunity for partners, family or close friends of PwPs to meet, share and support, and to learn from each other's experiences. Occasional talks are arranged on subjects that interest participants.

Our **Quality of Life (QL) Group** for PwPs meets in the afternoon of the *first Thursday of the month* in a private location. Sessions provide the opportunity for people to talk, laugh, share experiences, and learn to be forthright about feelings and needs. Participants exchange information about what works for them as individuals, in the belief that what has improved the quality of life for one person, may do so for others.

Once or twice a year we run **Side by Side courses** meeting weekly for five weeks to provide information and discussion for anyone living or working with someone with Parkinson's. Topics include prescription drug information, the role of the Parkinson's UK Local Adviser and the social benefits available, speech therapy, physiotherapy and occupational therapy, as well as the opportunity to share and learn from each other.

The **Young Parkinson's Network** is aimed at people with Parkinson's who tend still to be working and who want to meet and share experiences in a sociable setting. It meets the *first Thursday evening of the month* usually at The Steading, Hillend and organises occasional speakers and outings.

The **Young Parkinson's Carers Support Group** has similar objectives to the aforementioned Carers Support Group. It meets in a private location on the *first Tuesday evening of the month*.

Regular ACTIVITIES



.....and more, read on

There is no requirement for previous experience in any activity. Some are free, for some there is a small charge. Most are Branch dedicated sessions held weekly and run throughout the year with a few holiday breaks. We encourage people to give the various activities a try and we fully appreciate we all have preferences so there is no need to commit before trying a new activity.

Art: The sessions on *Thursday afternoons* at the RBGE Botanic Cottage are facilitated by a trained artist/illustrator. Participants can do their own thing or work according to the topic for the day. It is also an opportunity for participants to share their artistic experience and to help each other. All standards are welcome. The aim is to seek enjoyment from being creative and to socialise with fellow artists but you may find you have creative skills not previously recognised – there are research studies suggesting enhanced creativity in people on dopaminergic medication. The group occasionally arranges exhibitions of members' work.

Cycling: It is well recognised that people with Parkinson's who may have difficulties with walking, balance and tremors can very often become stable when riding a bike. The Edinburgh All-Ability Bike Centre at the Bangholm Outdoor Centre in Craighall has a large safe cycling area and access to the well-paved cycle paths network. It offers people the chance to get cycling, whatever their ability or background, using adaptive cycles that accommodate a very wide range of physical abilities. The Branch initially ran a pilot session but rather than have a restricted day and time, people are now encouraged to go along to *open sessions* which are well supervised and have trained volunteer helpers. Please consult the Centre's website for times but note it does close for the winter months.

Dance for Parkinson's: These Wednesday late morning sessions involve dancers specially trained according to the Dance for PD® principles with classes run in a highly supportive environment at Dance Base, Grassmarket and supported by Dance Base and Scottish Ballet. The session usually begins seated, giving a stable base for warm-up exercises then progresses to gentle choreographed movement around the floor to wake up stiff muscles and improve flexibility, encourage mind-body connection, improve co-ordination and balance and increase self-awareness and self-esteem. There is much reported about the benefits of movement to music for PwPs, both physically and emotionally, with research studies confirming anecdotal evidence. The Dance Base sessions are followed by an informal café for participants to relax, socialise and exchange information.

Gentle Exercise: This is taken at the Portobello Swim Centre on *Wednesday late mornings* by a yoga teacher and yoga therapist with long experience in working with people with Parkinson's. It involves exercises to support flexibility, strength, balance and co-ordination while working with the breath. Combining movement with breath work not only helps with breathing it encourages mental focus, allowing participants to separate from the rest of their day and create therapeutic space for themselves.

Indoor Bowling: The constant movement helps burn excess fat, the legs are exercised walking back and forth between ends; as you roll the ball the repeated flexing, bending, twisting and stretching tones the shoulders, arms, chest and leg muscles; and gripping the ball strengthens the hands. Your sense of balance and your hand-eye co-ordination are also given a workout. Then there's the pleasure achieved through a little competition! All this is done in a very gentle fashion in a sociable environment at Meadowmill Indoor Bowls, *Monday lunchtimes*.

Nordic Walking: This is a style of walking while using specially designed poles to help you move forwards (a bit like ski poles do). It means you are exercising your arms as well as your legs and the poles help you walk faster and more steadily and take the weight off the lower body joints. The benefits are to posture, mobility, cardiovascular fitness and co-ordination, while getting out into the open air. Sessions are held in the Meadows, Brunstfield, *Thursday lunch-times* and are run by a qualified Nordic Walking instructor.

Parkinson's Group at Thistle Foundation: On *Monday mornings* we run exercise classes for PwPs at the Thistle Foundation in Craigmillar. An instructor leads the sessions which begin with warm-up exercises followed by a variety of activities to help co-ordination and mobility and may involve use of different facilities within the Thistle complex. (Exercises can be done seated if necessary). The session ends with a little mindfulness and meditation to help individuals feel in charge and in control. The benefits of these sessions are not just physical, the group support and sociability make a significant contribution.

Pilates: This works on core stability and is taken by a neurophysiotherapist experienced in working with PwPs. Pilates is a low impact, controlled exercise regime that combines elements of resistance training with movements from ballet, yoga and tai chi. With regular attendance, it can help develop stability throughout your entire torso, which can help with some of the mobility and postural issues of PD. It also works to promote flexibility and increased range of motion for the joints. By helping reduce the effort placed on the body during everyday activities it can contribute to lowering fatigue levels. Sessions are *Monday afternoons*, Christ Church, Morningside and *Friday afternoons*, the Pollock Pavilion, Ferry Road.

Singing4Fun with Parkinson's: This is also open to people who don't have Parkinson's. It's about singing for enjoyment and sociability as well as to exercise the vocal folds and the facial muscles. We believe everyone can sing. Singing builds friendships and at our groups laughter is guaranteed. Sessions include rounds, part harmonies, traditional songs, jazz numbers, ballads and songs from around the globe. These are taught by call and response (no need to read music) and words are projected on a screen where appropriate. Sessions are on *Tuesday afternoons* in Marchmont St.Giles and *Wednesday evenings* in Grace Baptist North.

Swimming: Swimming helps people build muscle strength and improve their health and well-being. This gentle, weight-bearing exercise is ideal for PwPs as it takes place in a safe environment – the water. The Branch has an affiliation with the Edinburgh Leisure Community Access Programme. This means that a Member with Parkinson's may apply for a Get Active Card (valid for six months and renewable for a further three months). Card holders may swim in any Edinburgh Leisure Centre pool for £1 but must be able to access the pool without staff assistance. A care-partner accompanying the card holder has free entrance. A card holder can also use any of the other facilities at Edinburgh Leisure Centres. Get Active Cards may be applied for via the Branch by requesting an application form from our Hon Secretary, Liz Hume, on 07594 481175 or via Liz@edinburghparkinsons.org

Tai Chi for Parkinson's: Tai Chi is a gentle but powerful form of flowing movement with deep breathing and relaxation. It can help in improving balance, spinal alignment and posture, physical strength, flexibility and cardiovascular fitness. By combining the slow movement with the breath many people find it beneficial in reducing stress and anxiety. PwPs taking part in scientific trials involving tai chi have reported fewer falls. Sessions are *Tuesday mornings* in Barclay Viewforth Church and are run by a Tai Chi instructor who understands the problems PwPs have with posture and balance and adapts moves accordingly, as well as providing material for participants to work with at home.

PILOT Schemes & Parkinson's Café

The Branch listens to Members requests and introduces events and new activities when we can. As of autumn 2017 we have been trialling a Parkinson's Café in a dedicated area of the Festival Theatre Café to encourage new people to find out about the Branch, ask questions and meet existing Members. These are on the last *Tuesday afternoon of the month*. More details are on the Branch website or contact our Hon Secretary, Liz Hume, on 07594 481175 or via Liz@edinburghparkinsons.org.

Annual and Occasional EVENTS

We organise a Summer Lunch and Christmas Lunch to allow Members to get together and socialise at these celebratory times of the year. We may hold a coffee morning, organise a ceilidh or run a quiz evening and we are always looking for new ideas to bring people together, socialise and relax. Occasionally we may organise a fund-raising or a special informative event. In recent times, these have included an all-day seminar on the benefits of exercise and a half-day workshop on falls.

Edinburgh Research Interest Group ERIG

The Group provides opportunities for Branch Members with an interest in Parkinson's research to meet, learn, discuss, work together and generally further the cause of research. There are meetings on particular topics, occasional visits and a regular ERIG Newsletter. The Group is heavily involved in organising the *Annual Edinburgh Parkinson's Lecture* in collaboration with the Lothian Parkinson's Service Advisory Group, the MRC Centre for Regenerative Medicine and the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh.

Our WEBSITE

As well as the most up-to-date information about our activities – regular, occasional and one-off events – we hold past copies of our regular Newsletter, the ERIG Newsletter, archives of past notices and of News items and there are useful links to research information. We always suggest consulting the website for contacts, more information about an event or activity and the most up-to-date information which can be available there in advance of hard copy mailings or emails to Members.

Becoming a BRANCH MEMBER

If you have not already done so, we encourage you to become a Member of Parkinson's UK because of the wealth of information they make available. Membership (£4) is open to everyone whether you have Parkinson's, care for someone with the condition, or are a family member or a close friend. Membership of the Edinburgh Branch is free. To find out about becoming a Branch Member and benefitting from all that we have to offer please contact our Hon Secretary, Liz Hume, Liz@edinburghparkinsons.org or on 07594 481175.

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**Parkinson's UK** is the operating name of Parkinson's Disease Society of the United Kingdom, a charity registered in England and Wales (258197) and in Scotland (SC037554).

**Helpline** Monday to Friday 9.00am–7.00pm, Saturday 10.00am–2.00pm, FREEPHONE 0808 800 0303, [hello@parkinsons.org.uk](mailto:hello@parkinsons.org.uk).