

## Branch AIMS

The Branch, established since 1972, aims to support people with Parkinson's (PwPs) in Edinburgh and the Lothians by creating opportunities to meet and share experiences, providing regular activities, disseminating helpful information, organising one-off special events, supporting research, and engendering a sense of community. We keep people informed through our printed Branch Calendar, Newsletters, emails, postal mailings, and the Branch website [www.edinburghparkinsons.org](http://www.edinburghparkinsons.org), which provides a wealth of information about our activities and latest news items.

## 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. 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 Activities



**Branch Get-togethers** are held the *second Wednesday of the month 2–4pm* (September to April except December) in Bellevue Chapel, Rodney Street, EH7 4EL bringing Members and Friends together to listen to well-informed speakers on aspects of the condition, lifestyle issues and non-PD topics of interest as well as to meet-and-greet. Planned topics are published in our printed Branch Calendar. A Christmas Lunch is also organised and sometimes a summer one.

Our **Carers Support Group** is for Edinburgh based care-partners *last Wednesday of the month 10.30am–12.30pm* in the Pollock Pavilion, 227 Ferry Road, EH6 4SP. It provides an opportunity for partners, family or close friends of PwPs to meet, share, support, and learn from each other's experiences. Occasional talks are arranged on relevant topics. Contact: Cathie Quinn, 0131 557 6438, [cathie@edinburghparkinsons.org](mailto:cathie@edinburghparkinsons.org).

The **Edinburgh Young Parkinson's Support Group** is aimed at people with Parkinson's who tend still to be working and/or who are under the age of 65 and who want to meet and share experiences in a sociable setting. It meets the *first Thursday evening of the month starting 6.30/7.00pm* usually at The Steading, Hillend, EH10 7DU and organises occasional speakers and outings. It has a Closed Group Facebook page. Contact: Scott Wilson, 01899 220827, [scottwils01@btinternet.com](mailto:scottwils01@btinternet.com).

Our **Parkinson's Café** runs on the *last Tuesday of the month 1–3pm* for much of the year in a dedicated area of the Festival Theatre Café, Nicolson Street, EH8 9FT. Here, a number of Branch Members meet to encourage people to find out about the Branch in an informal environment over a cup of tea or coffee, with documented information available and most times the Parkinson's UK Local Adviser in attendance. Contact: Hon Secretary, 07594 481175, [honsec@edinburghparkinsons.org](mailto:honsec@edinburghparkinsons.org).

Our **Quality of Life (QL) Group** for PwPs meets in the afternoon *first Thursday of the month 2–3.30pm* in a private location, Roseburn. Sessions provide the opportunity 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. Contact: Alison Williams, 0131 557 5979, 07719 603321, [alison@edinburghparkinsons.org](mailto:alison@edinburghparkinsons.org).

Once a year, we run a **Side by Side course** which meets weekly for five or six 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 West Lothian Branch runs a similar course. Contact: Cathie Quinn, 0131 557 6438, [cathie@edinburghparkinsons.org](mailto:cathie@edinburghparkinsons.org).

The **Young Parkinson's Carers Support Group** has similar objectives to the previously mentioned Carers Support Group. At time of print new arrangements are being made. Contact Hon Secretary, 07594 481175, [honsec@edinburghparkinsons.org](mailto:honsec@edinburghparkinsons.org) for the latest situation.

## Regular BODY AND MIND Activities



.....and more, read on

There is no requirement for previous experience in any activity although a few require a pre-assessment. Some are free, some ask for a contribution towards costs, some run throughout the year, some have **holiday breaks**, some may still be in a trial or pilot phase. We encourage people to give the various activities a try and fully appreciate we all have preferences. **Do check with the relevant contact person and with the Branch website** for more details and the latest information.

**Adaptive Yoga:** The aim is to improve ability to manage negative thinking and emotions, lower blood-pressure, improve sleep, increase confidence and energy levels, improve posture, reduce muscular pain, strengthen weak muscles and release tight ones, increase joint mobility, and encourage an overall sense of wellbeing and relaxation. Participants meet *Mondays 6–7pm* at The Steading, Hillend, EH10 7DU to learn the tools they can take home and practise between classes. Contact: Jean Itier, 07985 528839, [jean@yogatherapyedinburgh.com](mailto:jean@yogatherapyedinburgh.com).

**Aquatherapy:** Sessions are held *Fridays 2-4pm* in the purpose-built Hydrotherapy Pool at the Astley Ainslie Hospital, EH9 2HL and are conducted by a Physiotherapist who also specialises in Hydrotherapy. The aim is to help people with Parkinson's build strength and flexibility using the extra support the water provides. For health and safety reasons, we ask potential participants to complete a self-referral assessment form before being booked in for a short block of sessions. Each participant is given a time-slot of half-an-hour in the water. Contact: David Waughman, [davidw@edinburghparkinsons.org](mailto:davidw@edinburghparkinsons.org).

**Art:** Sessions on *Thursdays 1.30–3.30pm* at the RBGE Botanic Cottage, EH3 5LR are facilitated by a trained artist/illustrator. Participants can do their own thing or work according to the topic for the day. It is 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. The group occasionally arranges exhibitions of members' work. Contact: Lindsay McDermid, 0131 551 5287, [lindsay@edinburghparkinsons.org](mailto:lindsay@edinburghparkinsons.org).

**Chess:** Sessions are held *monthly (October to April), Wednesdays 2–4pm* at Maitland Bowling Club, 96 Main Street, EH4 5AB. Contact: Kenneth Williamson, 0131 336 4088, [trainbuff1@virginmedia.com](mailto:trainbuff1@virginmedia.com).

**Dance for Parkinson's Scotland:** Sessions on *Wednesdays 11.30am–1pm* involve dancers specially trained according to the Dance for PD ® principles with classes run in a highly supportive environment at Dance Base, Grassmarket, EH1 2JU 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. Contact: Meghan Bidwell, [meghan@dancebase.co.uk](mailto:meghan@dancebase.co.uk).

**Edinburgh Leisure – Swimming and More:** Swimming helps build muscle strength and improve health and wellbeing. 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 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. An accompanying care-partner 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. Contact: Hon Secretary, 07594 481175, [honsec@edinburghparkinsons.org](mailto:honsec@edinburghparkinsons.org).

**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, Tranent, EH33 1LZ, *Mondays 12–2pm*. Contact: Marjorie Barker, 0131 449 3450.

**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, EH9 1JU, *Thursdays 12–1pm* and are run by a qualified Nordic Walking instructor. Contact: Julia Melton, 0131 445 2500, [julia@edinburghparkinsons.org](mailto:julia@edinburghparkinsons.org).

**Parkinson's Exercise Group at Thistle:** On *Mondays 10.30am–12.15pm* there are exercise classes for PwPs at the Thistle Foundation, 13 Queen's Walk, EH16 4EA. A qualified instructor leads the sessions which begin with warm-up exercises followed by a variety of activities to help co-ordination and mobility. 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. Contact: Chris Davies, 0131 661 3366, [chris.davies@thistle.org.uk](mailto:chris.davies@thistle.org.uk).

**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. Pilates can help develop stability throughout your entire torso, which in turn can assist some of the mobility and postural issues of PD. It also works to promote flexibility and increased range of motion for the joints and can contribute to lowering fatigue levels. Sessions are *Mondays 2.45–3.45pm and 4–5pm*, Christ Church Morningside, Morningside Road, EH10 4DD, *Fridays 11am–12noon*, Morningside Parish Church, 2 Cluny Gdns, EH10 6BQ and *Fridays 2–3pm*, Pollock Pavilion, 227 Ferry Road, EH64SP. Our Neurophysiotherapist is developing a **Neurodynamic Exercise** programme for the Branch based on her experience with Pilates, Neurophysiotherapy and the PD Warrior Programme. Contact: Sasha Baggaley, [sasha@edinburghparkinsons.org](mailto:sasha@edinburghparkinsons.org).

**Singing4Fun:** Also open to those who don't have Parkinson's. It's about singing for enjoyment and sociability as well as to exercise the vocal folds (cords) and the facial muscles. Singing builds friendships and at our groups laughter is guaranteed. We sing rounds, harmonies, jazz numbers, traditional songs, ballads and songs from around the globe. These are taught by call and response i.e. by ear, no need to read music, on *Tuesdays 2–4pm*, Marchmont St.Giles, Kilgraston Road, EH9 2DW and *Wednesdays 7–9pm*, Bellevue Chapel, Rodney Street, EH7 4EL. Contact: Cathie Quinn, 0131 557 6438, [cathie@edinburghparkinsons.org](mailto:cathie@edinburghparkinsons.org).

**Tai Chi:** 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. Sessions are *Tuesdays 11am–12noon*, Barclay Viewforth Church, 1 Wright's Houses, EH10 4HR and run by a Tai Chi instructor who understands the problems PwPs have with posture and balance and adapts moves accordingly. He also provides material for participants to work with at home. Contact: Kevin Brown, 01506 845 498, [kevin@chi-flow.co.uk](mailto:kevin@chi-flow.co.uk).

**Tandem and Other 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 Branch offers tandem cycling on interesting safe routes in Edinburgh and East Lothian for those unsure of their ability and/or confidence on a bike. An additional factor in using a tandem is to gently force increased intensity for the rear partner, with its associated health benefits. The tandem is controlled by a qualified volunteer. Contact: Brian Moore, [brian@edinburghparkinsons.org](mailto:brian@edinburghparkinsons.org). Dates and times arranged independently.

We also draw your attention to the Edinburgh ABC (All-ability Bike Centre), EH6 4RJ and at Saughton Park (where Brian can also assist). Contact: David Glover, 07500 069357, [david.glover@cyclinguk.org](mailto:david.glover@cyclinguk.org).

**Wu Style Tai Chi Chuan:** The practice concentrates on the slow repetition of clearly defined moves which build, in time, into a sequence (hand form) that can enhance cognitive as well as physical states. The class includes work in pairs, developing awareness of and reaction to our own and others' position in space. Exercises are based on self defence applications which help participants remember and understand the movements and the biomechanics of moving from one posture to another. Sessions are *Wednesdays 5.30–7.30pm* at the Centre for Regenerative Medicine, Little France, EH16 4UU. Contact: Philippa Hope, 07720 674924, [phobinder@aol.com](mailto:phobinder@aol.com).

## 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 specific topics, occasional visits and an ERIG Newsletter. The Group organises 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. Contact: David Melton, [davidm@edinburghparkinsons.org](mailto:davidm@edinburghparkinsons.org).

## Becoming a BRANCH MEMBER or FRIEND

We encourage you to become a Member of Parkinson's UK because of the wealth of information the organisation makes available. Membership is open to everyone whether you have Parkinson's, are a care-partner, family member or a close friend. You can then join the Edinburgh Branch or if you do not want to join P-UK you can become a Friend of the Branch. To find out more, please contact our Hon Secretary, 07594 481175, [honsec@edinburghparkinsons.org](mailto:honsec@edinburghparkinsons.org).

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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 9am–7pm, Saturday 10am–2pm, FREEPHONE 0800 800 0303, [hello@parkinsons.org.uk](mailto:hello@parkinsons.org.uk).