

Contact Us:  
0300 330 1455

Newsletter  
July 2021



With the easing of lockdown and the summer months ahead of us there is a 'feel good' feeling that we hope is reflected in this newsletter.

## Message from John Archer - CEO

Francis says "It's good to be back"

As I write this, we enter another phase of the pandemic with great news about the Covid vaccination program, hoping we are still on course for the "unlock" date of 19<sup>th</sup> July.

There are more face to face meetings, obviously adhering to social distancing rules, but still a real boost to start to meet our clients and their carers again. As our peer support groups resume across the county, Headway Hertfordshire are looking forward to meeting clients old and new, to move forward with the support we can give them.

Jo said she "felt very excited to come back to the group although a little nervous! It feels good to be here like I've never been away!"

We have learnt so much over the past 15 months and will be looking to take the best of this new found knowledge forward to provide the best service we can to all. We will continue to use technologies like Zoom to help engage with groups like our carers when we offer them our 5 week education course which has proved a real success.

The Headway Hertfordshire team are doing a fantastic job and I am really proud to be a part of the work they do to help those recovering from a brain injury.

I hope we can all get to enjoy the summer and start to move forward with our lives.

My best wishes to you all.

John



## Peer Support groups meet up again!

With some of the Covid restrictions easing and still following the Government guidelines, some of our peer support groups have resumed at venues where we have an outside seating area to sit, weather permitting!



Following fortnightly zoom meetings, St Albans and Borehamwood were the first peer support groups to meet up and it was lovely – it did feel like we had never been in lockdown and I have to say it lifted all our spirits. Everyone was really happy to see each other again.

Over the past 3 – 4 months our Welwyn and Stevenage peer support groups have been supported by weekly zoom meetings on a Friday, but again, we decided to meet outside at a garden centre, it was thoroughly enjoyed by all. It was great to hear the laughter, banter and caring concerns from those who were able to attend.

The Watford group have also had their first meet up outside, with Hemel Hempstead and East Herts holding theirs in the next few weeks.

If you wish to come along to one of our peer support groups, please contact the office on 0300 330 1455 for more information.



## A recent discussion panel on awareness of head injury in sport

Concussion in sport is such an important issue. As a charity that supports local people to rebuild their lives after a brain injury, we are passionate about trying to reduce the number of people whose lives are forever changed by head injuries.

We are equally passionate about encouraging people, particularly youngsters, to be active and play sport for all the benefits it can bring. The issue is, how do we balance these two aims to keep people safe and help them if they have a brain injury whilst participating in their sport.

We held an open discussion panel on a Zoom call on 5<sup>th</sup> May hosted by Adrian Laycock, chair of Headway Hertfordshire

and facilitated by Luke Griggs, deputy chief executive of Headway UK. We were joined by ex-England and Arsenal footballer Alan Smith, patron of Headway Hertfordshire and Eleanor Furneaux, the former skeleton athlete whose Olympic career was cut short by a brain injury.

We were supported by the heads of the associations running football, rugby and hockey in Hertfordshire and some young local sports people who joined in the discussion.

We will be looking to do more in this area over the coming months.

You can watch and listen to the full session via this You Tube link:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p3zQmiGCuYs&t=1229s>

## Wedding bells ring out for Headway Hertfordshire couple



Congratulations to Lou and Alex who are clients of Headway Hertfordshire. They managed to navigate the ever changing rules and regulations of Covid and got married on 10<sup>th</sup> June 2021 in St Albans.

The sun shone on their special day and they were able to enjoy it with 30 of their close family and friends. The wedding was followed by a honeymoon on the Isle of Skye. A truly beautiful location and according to Lou they weren't hassled too much by midges!

We wish you both every happiness!





## A poem by Headway Hertfordshire client, Stef Harvey, depicting a walk during lockdown

A Headway Hertfordshire client who attends the Watford Habit group has used poetry to describe her walks through Lockdown, entitled “Did You?” I think you will agree it is a beautiful and talented piece of work.



### “Did You”

Did you ever walk barefoot over succulent grass, dry grass, or dew drenched grass?

Did you walk in the ice, a drought, frost or rain?

Did you get a daisy caught between your toes, rub your feet on buttercups, and caress clover with the sole of your foot?

Did you scrunch your feet on gravel, on stones baked in the sun, on wet mud, on dry mud, on hot mud, on silt?

Did you criss-cross the stream from one bank to the other, ducking and dodging overgrowth above and fish underneath, meandering with the flow and against it, allowing the pools, ripples and shallows to resist or encourage your way?

Did the shadows and the shade protect you or play tricks on your mind?

Was the sun too intense or trying not quite hard enough?

If you concentrated really hard, could you smell the scent of a particular plant or flower nearby?

Did you notice the other creatures enjoying the plants and flowers too?

Did you notice how close the trees grow to each other, not further apart, not closer together?

Did you feel the tree bark and wonder how the tree got it right?

Or wrong? Or different? Or the same?

Can you hear birds, people, technology or industry?

Can you hear the traffic? Can you hear the no-traffic?

Did you go for bit of a walk?

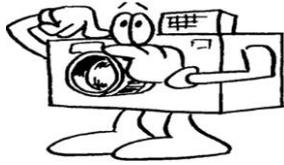
Did you encounter much more than a walk?

Did you even notice?

Did you?



By Stef Harvey – June 2021



## Photo competition results from the Spring Activity Book

Eight members of the Headway Hertfordshire team took photos that were printed in the Spring Activity Book, we asked you all to vote for a winner, here are the results...



1<sup>st</sup> Place



2<sup>nd</sup> Place



3<sup>rd</sup> Place

We would now like to open this up to all of you, so please email a favourite photo that you have taken in the last few months. We will ask Alan Smith our Patron, to judge them, with the winner and two runners up receiving a small prize!

Please send your entries to [enquiries@headway-herts.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@headway-herts.org.uk) by the 1<sup>st</sup> September 2021...so get snapping!

## Save the date for our AGM

**AGM**

Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> October is the date of our next AGM, unlike last year, which was held virtually, we are arranging for this to take place at the Whitehill Centre in Welwyn at 10am, with lunch provided. It would be great to see as many of you as possible and we have hired out a much larger venue to accommodate us all safely. Further details and directions will be sent out nearer the time, along with membership details to enable you to vote.

## Pastures new for Carol Ryan, a Headway client



We would all like to wish Carol, one of our clients at Headway Hertfordshire every happiness as she has recently moved from Hertfordshire to Darlington. Carol has moved to a lovely bungalow near to her sister, Norma, who is her carer, and has settled in really well. She took us on a 'virtual tour' of her bungalow recently at the Habit Zoom group and Chair Yoga class. Carol has been a client with us since 2017

and has regularly attended our groups in Hemel Hempstead (Pre Covid 19). Carol has made many friends through Headway Hertfordshire, still enjoys speaking to them and says that she will miss everyone considerably. She is now looking forward to starting at Headway Darlington and is hoping to visit them when everything opens up again after the lockdown.

Good luck Carol, we will all miss you. You are always so cheerful and positive and keen to join in with the different activities that Headway Hertfordshire provide. Keep us posted with how you are getting on.

## Volunteer David describes why he started volunteering for Headway Hertfordshire



David began volunteering for us at the Carers Education Workshops. In the link below you will find his story and what led to him becoming a valued volunteer. Retiring from full time employment and being a carer himself, he started to make decisions on how he wished to use his time.

He thought of the families of loved ones with a brain injury that he had encountered during the years he was dealing with his wife's own brain injury. His story is one of knowledge, compassion and strength, we are so lucky that he chose Headway Hertfordshire to spend some of his valuable time.

Link: <https://www.headway-herts.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/David-Gibson.pdf>

## Relaunch of the Ambassador Programme



We have a team of valued ambassadors who volunteer some of their time to promoting awareness of Headway Hertfordshire across the county. This has been a difficult task for them over the last 16 months, but we are ready to relaunch this integral part of our campaign to ensure that everyone affected by brain injury is aware of us and what we do.

## Useful links

Short films describing what a brain injury is like to live with

Link:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nS0F\\_k4GT9Y](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nS0F_k4GT9Y)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XzIzrueE1dQ&t=18s>

Healthy walks in Hertfordshire

Link: <https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/healthwalks>

Hertfordshire Directory

Link: <https://directory.hertfordshire.gov.uk/Categories/3>

## Fundraising updates – what has taken place and what is planned in the months ahead



You may remember, in the last newsletter, that we introduced you to Steve Brenton, who will be running the London Marathon for Headway Hertfordshire in October. Steve said “I know how much a head injury can impact a life as my brother – a much better runner in his day – sustained a serious one following a cycling accident. This is a very worthy cause to support!”

If you would like to support Steve, you can find his Virgin Money Giving page here:

<https://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/SteveBrenton1/1>

**HATS FOR HEADWAY** has always proved a popular annual event and more recently many of our clients and supporters have knitted hats which we then sell. Once again we have some amazing volunteers who are willing to organise a stall from which to sell these hats, amongst many other items, so if you are a new starter or an accomplished knitter, please consider knitting us a hat or two!!

**A HUGE THANK YOU** goes out to North Herts Road Runners who have been tirelessly raising funds for us, even through lockdown, which has now totalled over £3000, thanks for every step that each and every one of you have taken in raising this amount.

**WHAT A FANTASTIC EFFORT** also by James and Marian Ferguson from St. Albans who have, over the last couple of years, raised in excess of £17,000. This is an incredible achievement, from shaving their heads to organising Spin-a-thons and distributing collection boxes in their local area, they really do deserve our most grateful thanks.



Due to the pandemic restrictions the **5x5 Challenge** was put on hold but we now are planning to launch it for Headway Hertfordshire, hopefully during September 2021. If anyone has already identified a challenge on the 5 x 5 theme, we can support by backing an individual's event.

Do any challenge or activity based on the number 5, donate £5 and nominate 5 other people to do the same.

We are big advocates that going for a run or a walk can be incredibly beneficial for our mental wellbeing.

That's a great reason for us to ask you to get behind us as an individual or as a team to raise money for Headway Hertfordshire

#### Keeping in Touch letters

Just a heads up from the admin team, periodically we need to update your preferences in how we keep in touch with you.

If you receive this form through the post, please complete and return in the SAE provided. Please also make sure you put your name on it – otherwise we don't know it's from you. By ticking the 'Yes' box, we will be able to keep you informed about news, events, activities and resources that are designed to support you and your families.

**Until next time, stay positive, stay safe.**