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MND Association | Reading and West Berks

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News Letter



Former headteacher's childhood pals rally following devastating MND diagnosis

Just a year ago dad-of-three Jamie Miles, aged 45, was leading a busy primary school – now MND has robbed him of his ability to do the job he loved.



Instead, he is valuing the small things he took for granted and his incredible friends who are fundraising for the Reading and West Berkshire branch.

Jamie, who lives in Earley, with his wife Aneka and three young children had to step down from his job at Woodlands Park Primary School in Maidenhead, when he was diagnosed with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), the most common form of MND, earlier this year.

Today he relies on a wheelchair as MND has affected his mobility, breathing and speech. He knew he had to step away from work after his diagnosis as 'you can't be a headteacher unless you give it your all'.

Jamie previously spent 16 years at St Edward's Royal Free Ecumenical School in Windsor as a PE teacher, deputy head and then co-headteacher.

He said: "I've always been a people person. I miss the staff and children. I absolutely loved building positive environments which teachers and young people enjoyed working in.

"I had only been at Woodlands for just under three years, and we were working hard to improve the school.

"The project wasn't finished, and it was hard to leave after investing so much energy into the school."

He said the staff and students have been 'extremely supportive' and many regularly check in.

They also help with his fundraising efforts for the Reading and West Berkshire branch of the MND Association.

The Branch has been supporting Jamie and his family through home adaptations and by funding a rental wheelchair to maintain his mobility while he waits for suitable equipment to be provided by Berkshire West Wheelchair Service.

His childhood friends have raised more than £13,664 so far after completing a sponsored walk in his honour in his hometown of Chichester at the end of June.

The fundraiser far exceeded its original £3,000 target, which Jamie did not expect.

"Everyone had gone to so much effort to come. They all showed up in my hour of need," he said.

"I was waiting at the finish line for everyone and greeted them as they arrived. I was amazed by how many people took part in the walk and by everyone's generosity.

"Even though we now live in different parts of the south of England, they visit me regularly and keep me going.

"I think when people see the impact it's had, they realise how challenging the disease is.

"I'm so pleased we can contribute to the work the MND Association does. We hope to do more fundraising in the future.

Continued on page 2

Former headteacher's childhood pals rally round to help - cont

"The money raised will help support people living with MND as well as fund research to try to find a cure."

Jamie became unwell in April 2025 and sought medical advice in September after developing pain in his lower back.

Initially diagnosed with muscular stiffness, his symptoms continued to worsen before MRI, muscle and nerve examinations confirmed he had ALS at the end of January.

Jamie described coming to terms with the diagnosis as one of the biggest challenges.

"Life is very different. I can't be the husband and dad that I want to be, which makes me sad," he said.

"It turned our lives upside down, and it still feels surreal. The biggest challenge has been making peace with the fact that my condition is terminal and adapting to my changing needs.

"My mobility is deteriorating quite quickly, and I'm reliant on my family for help and support.

"My wife and children have been very resilient and do so much to support me – they are the ones who keep me going.

"I really value the small things that I took for granted."

This includes reading with his children, grabbing a coffee with a friend or simply spending time in the garden.

"My friends have visited me regularly, providing meals, helping with childcare and keeping my spirits up," he added.

The MND Association has also played a vital role in helping the family adapt to life with the condition, providing practical advice, emotional support, a temporary wheelchair, assistance with paperwork, voice recording technology and funding for family outings.



"The Reading and West Berkshire branch has been incredible," Jamie said, adding that the wheelchair and adapted car allow him to maintain some independence and continue spending time with his family.

"They've done so much for us. They regularly keep in contact and check in. I think the most important thing is that they've made us feel that we are not alone.

"It can be easy to become a recluse when you have a disability, but the wheelchair they provided me with has been a lifesaver.

"It allows me to get out and be more independent."

Jamie hopes the fundraiser will not only support families affected by MND but also increase awareness of the condition and the need for greater investment in research.

"My disease is quite aggressive. There won't be a cure in the time I have left, but there is hope that one will be found in the future," he said.

"It's such a cruel disease, and people shouldn't have to suffer in this way. It's starting to get a higher profile, but research into a cure is still underfunded, and that needs to change."

Jane Gilbert



Jamie's children proudly wearing their MND T shirts for the Chichester walk

For more details on Jamie's friends' online donation page supporting the Branch visit:

https://www.justgiving.com/page/jamies-chi-friends

MPs back concerns as MND patients face delays in vital wheelchair support

Concerns have been raised with NHS leaders after people living with MND in the Berkshire West area are experiencing delays getting vital wheelchair equipment.

Feedback gathered by the Reading and West Berkshire Branch of the MND Association highlighted a number of issues with the current wheelchair provider AJM Healthcare, including delays in assessments, slow communication and difficulties in receiving and having them adapted.


NEWBURY NEWS

'MND doesn't wait' as couple left begging for wheelchair

Delays in provision as they face race against time with incurable condition

In one case, highlighted in the local press Graham Attridge, of Newbury, told how had been waiting 18 months for a wheelchair to meet his needs and regain his independence. He has now been fitted with his new chair saying: "At last, the chair that was really needed." However,


MP frustrated by wheelchair delays

'Serious questions need to be asked' over waiting times

Graham believed there was still work to be done to improve the service.
Thanks to the Association's campaign and intervention from local MPs, principally Newbury's Lee Dillon, the branch is starting to see some positive action, says Chair Andy Jones.

He said: ""We have continued to campaign on behalf of our people living with MND to get urgent focus and action to improve the very poor wheelchair service provided to the Berkshire West residents by AJM Healthcare.
"We have been grateful for the support of our local MPs, principally Lee Dillon, who have written to both AJM and Thames Integrated Care Board (ICB) to demand action.

Through this focus, and support by the MND Association staff, the ICB are now meeting AJM weekly to track actions. We hope that this detailed review and pressure results in positive and rapid resolutions. We will be monitoring progress closely and will not relent until we are confident that the service is at the standard our residents living with MND deserve".

About 80 per cent of people living with MND will require a wheelchair as their condition progresses. NICE guidelines recommend referrals are made to ensure timely access to appropriate equipment which is critical to maintaining independence and quality of life to meet rapidly changing needs.

Several individual experiences have now been shared with health leaders to show the impact these issues are having on people living with the disease.

They include reports of waiting extended periods for assessment, receiving equipment which is not correctly fitted and experiencing difficulties getting timely responses from the service which covers West Berkshire, Reading, and Wokingham.

In two cases the branch is currently funding costly rental wheelchairs for men living with MND who are waiting for the delivery of suitable bespoke equipment from the statutory service.

AJM Healthcare says it is working hard to address 'inherited challenges', modernise how the service works and return it to a good standard of performance. The NHS ICB is working closely with the provider and partners in a constructive way to address these issues.

Jane Gilbert



Graham and wife Angela pictured with the wheelchair that didn't meet his needs



Graham with his long awaited specially adapted wheelchair which he is learning to control using his head and his knees

7in7 marathon man is a friend indeed

Let's give a massive shout out to 7in7 marathon man Lee Didcock who pushed himself to the limit in honour of his best pal Kevin Jefferies, who is living with MND.

Lee, aged 46, completed his epic 210-mile walk from Liverpool's Anfield to the home of Reading FC raising MND funds and awareness along the way. It tested him both emotionally and physically while walking seven marathons in seven days, much of it on his own or with a few of his family in support.

The following day Lee took his final walk into Reading's Atrium Club to cheers from the crowd gathered for an MND charity football match on May 23rd. Many of the players were friends of Kevin, a former player and dad-of-five, from Spencers Wood, near Reading.

Lee declared afterwards: "After completing seven marathons in seven days, walking in today and seeing all the support honestly meant everything.

"This whole journey has been for MND and our friend Kevin – and today really showed how powerful people coming together can be. Still emotional. Still grateful. Still pushing awareness."

Lee's incredible efforts and those of all involved in the charity football match resulted in a fundraising total of £6,337.

It has been split between Reading and West Berkshire Branch (£3,168), Kevin and his young family (£2,219) and MND Association Research (£950).

Committee member Linda Green paid tribute to all those involved after the Dream Team met at a recent wrap for the fundraiser.

"How incredible was Lee for his friend Kevin and our lovely Claire Maslen who walked from Oxford as well as Lee's mum, stepdad and cousin who also took part," she said.

The branch is also grateful to the following volunteers:

Gary Baynham for all his awesome work for the football fundraiser;
Matt Bicknell who organised the friends' re-union match; Branch Secretary Jacqui McGachie, her husband Andy Mancey, son Zac, and Anna Roe who served a brilliant BBQ on an extremely hot day; Andy Findlay and Rob Creech of J&S Meats Ascot who provided the sausages and burgers and, as always, our incredible team of volunteers and friends who ran the raffle and donated prizes.

The amazing generosity of all those who bought tickets and auction lots will help us to make every day matter for the local MND community.

Jane Gilbert



Branch Secretary Jacqui McGachie and husband Andy Mancey slave over a hot BBQ to dish up fantastic burgers and hot dogs



Cheers for Lee from Gary Baynham with Lee's proud family in the background



Hannah Allen buying raffle tickets from Janine Barton and Jan Gryglaszewska



Bravo Claire – you smashed it too!

Massive congratulations to the MND Dream Team's heroic Claire Maslen who joined Lee Didcock on the last, sweltering, 30-mile leg of his epic walk from Oxford to Reading.

Claire still managed to smile as she limped in on blistered feet to cheers at Reading's Select Car Leasing Stadium finish on May 22nd. Her fantastic effort has raised a whopping £5,000 towards Team Westcoast's MND fund in memory of her dear friend Helen Jay who lost her battle with the disease.

Claire, who is Catering Supervisor at Westcoast, said: "Ten years on the loss is still deeply felt and I wanted to do something positive in her memory.

"The Reading and West Berkshire branch provides vital support to people living with Motor Neurone Disease and is a lifeline for families facing the many challenges that come with this illness.

"I'm also incredibly grateful to the fantastic company I work for, Westcoast, who have kindly offered to match every pound I raise, doubling the total amount for this amazing cause.

"Thank you for helping me honour Helen's memory."

Check out Claire's story on her online donation page here:

https://www.justgiving.com/page/claires-mnd-walk

Jane Gilbert



A triumphant Lee and Claire with Lee's cousin Dave Purton who supported them



Our MND Dream Team was at the finish to congratulate Lee and Claire

Thanks to Big Yellow, Reading, for supporting Reading and West Berkshire MND Association

Get in touch with MND Connect on 0808 802 6262

MND Connect is available Monday to Friday between 9am - 5pm and 7pm - 10:30pm. Calls to this number are free from landlines and mobile phones within the UK and do not appear on itemised bills. You can also email mndconnect@mndassociation.org

Baking every day matter



Claire with star baker and Westcoast employee Daria Oslamenko who made a spectacular cake, topped with fresh berries.

Committee member Claire Maslen's cake sale at Westcoast was a real showstopper raising a whopping £800 for our local MND community.

Claire, who is catering supervisor at the Theale-based IT company, said: "What a fantastic cake sale – fab colleagues, helpers and bakers, all for an amazing charity."

"I cannot thank everyone enough for their support and kindness, all total stars. Together we can really make a difference."

The event in May was one of many MND fundraisers being run by Westcoast colleagues after Claire successfully nominated the branch as its Charity of the Year.

And as Claire keeps everyone well fed in the staff canteen who could resist loading up a plate of tasty treats for a heartfelt cause?

Coming up, the events team are planning a fancy dress pub walk, a Thames Path challenge, an office quiz, a Hallowe'en fancy dress, a pub quiz, a Christmas jumper day and sky dives.



Team Westcoast is simply amazing!

Jane Gilbert

Ice and a slice for MND funds

Our amazing charity partners at Westcoast Ltd boosted their MND fundraising efforts by bravely resurrecting the Ice Bucket Challenge.

In all, twenty-three members of staff from the Theale office participated in the event which was held throughout the day on 8th June.

Despite a chilly and rainy start to the morning, by the afternoon the sun was shining, and enthusiasm remained high as various departments and teams came to watch their brave colleagues take the plunge.

Some had volunteered; others had been nominated by their co-workers who each paid £5 per bucket to see their teammates doused in icy cold water. Not surprisingly perhaps, the biggest turnout and loudest cheers were for members of the Senior Management team who gamely joined in.



Bucket at the ready for good sport Westcoast Finance Director George Woolley

Branch Committee members Mary and Barry Dodds, Margaret Moss and Linda Green together with Association Visitor Wendy Gouldthorpe were on hand to lend some moral support, cheering on the soaking wet participants as they emerged from the small pool that had been set up outside the company's main Reception.

Event organisers Andrea Bowyer and Emma Sines did a splendid job keeping track of the running order, collecting money and ensuring an endless supply of buckets filled with icy water. Everyone agreed that the day was a great success and in all the fantastic sum of £1,400 was raised. Further events are planned for later in the year so watch this space!

Wendy Gouldthorpe

When Truckfest came to town

The two-day Truckfest rolled into Newbury Showground in June and our MND Dream Team was ready with a mega Tombola to boost funds.

“Events like this just don’t happen without the teamwork and dedication of our wonderful volunteers”, says Events Lead Mary Dodds. And together they raised a brilliant £614.

The amount of preparation before they even set foot in the showground was enormous. From sorting and organising the Tombola prizes, transporting them from the Big Yellow storage unit to a larger space at Calcot Community Centre where 400 items were individually ticketed, there was no shortage of work.

A huge thank-you to everyone who helped behind the scenes, especially Paddy Lunn, Margaret Moss, Jan Gryglaszewska, Mandy Claridge and Linda Green.

Mary said: “The day before the event, David Sayer, Ian, our man with the van, and Mandy Claridge, Barry and I, headed to Newbury Showground to begin the set-up.

The weather did its best to test us, strong winds and tent-building are not the best combination, but with teamwork, determination, and a good sense of humour, we got everything up and standing.”

Not surprisingly, it all came together beautifully, and the team was ready to welcome visitors the next morning.

The time, energy, and kindness of our volunteers helps us to continue making every day matter for people living with MND - and that is something special.



David and Lorraine Claridge

The heat is on for MND fundraiser Lin



MND fundraiser Lin Jenkins is revving up for her future summer sales despite recent setbacks caused by the heatwaves.

She said: “It has been a mixed season, with several successful events, but the recent heatwaves have hit us hard. We were unable to attend two of our biggest events because of the heat.”

On a brighter note, the Stoke Row Steam Rally was as impressive as ever, and Lin’s Retro stall even received a mention in the programme.

“People love the stall and come back to see us each year,” she said. “King Charles I also dropped in for his usual chat!

“I was given a ride on a miniature steam engine and even had the chance to sit on a Harley-Davidson.

“The heat will continue to affect events, but most of our upcoming appearances are at car boot sales, which finish by late morning.

“But we keep going and continue to fight for the cause. I especially value the moments when people come to our stall to share cherished memories of loved ones they have lost. It brings them comfort to know we are still out there, fighting for them.”

Lin also thanked her many helpers for their invaluable support throughout the year, as well as everyone who supplied her with stock to sell or visited her stall at events.

MND quizzers were on top form

Huge congratulations to Paul and Charlotte Morgan-Russell for hosting a fantastic fundraising Quiz Night at The Barn in Purley, Reading.

They didn't just fill the room - they packed it to the rafters in memory of Paul's mum Juli. The atmosphere was buzzing, the energy was brilliant, and it was so close to full capacity. That kind of turnout only happens when people truly believe in what they're doing, and it's a real credit to all their hard work, passion and organisation.

The whole evening was a huge success raising a wonderful £1,446 for branch funds. Supper was spot-on (we loved every bite), the ice-cream van outside serving delicious treats was a perfect touch, and the raffle prizes added even more excitement to an already brilliant night.

A wonderful event, community, and effort for an incredibly important cause.

Mary Dodds





Top photo shows Lin Jenkins, Tony Grove, Paul and Charlotte Morgan-Russell with their children all sporting MND T shirts, Linda Green, Jan and Ed Gryglaszewski, Mary Dodds and (kneeling) Barry Dodds

In the bottom picture two young quizzers have their eyes on the wonderful array of raffle prizes!

Your Branch needs You!



Our three wonderful volunteer Association Visitors (AVs) provide a lifeline of practical and emotional support for the local MND community and are highly valued.

They do, however, need more people to join the team for their vital work to be even more widely available to local families.

Full online training is provided and our Avs would be happy to chat about what the role involves.

Can you help make every day matter? See our flyer on page 9.



Join Our Team of Volunteers Today!

Become an Association Visitor with the Reading and West Berkshire Branch and support people living with MND.

Do you have good listening skills? Would you like to offer direct support to people living with MND? Contact us today to learn more about our AV role.



www.mndassociation.org/get-involved/volunteering

volunteering@mndassociation.org

Registered with FUNDRAISING REGULATOR



Thanks to Alec Jenkins for another super quiz. See page 16 for answers

Thank you Tesco – for helping a lot!

What a truly wonderful book sale we had raising funds for MND at Tesco West Extra supermarket in Reading.

From the moment we began setting the books out on the tables, people were gathering around to choose their favourites, We could barely unpack the crates quickly enough.

When we saw the incredible number of beautiful brand-new books being brought out by Tesco's Community Champion Angela Rose, I wondered if we would ever get through them all.

Branch Committee Member Linda Green and I were thrilled by the response; we almost sold out, with only a small number of books left at the end.

For the first hour and a half, we hardly stopped selling. With paperbacks priced at just 20p and hardbacks at 50p, many people very generously added extra donations for the MND Association. It was lovely to see people leaving with armfuls of books, and the children's books were especially popular.

Thanks to Tesco West's incredibly kind donation of these books, together with Angela's enthusiasm, encouragement and support from the very beginning, we raised a fantastic £348.96 to support our vital work. It means so much to know that the money will help local people and families affected by Motor Neurone Disease.

We cannot thank Angela enough for her kindness and generosity; we simply could not have achieved such a brilliant result without her.

Tesco is very fortunate to have such a brilliant Community Champion.

Mary Dodds



Mary Dodds, Angela Rose and Linda Green



Flowers and fizz for AV Wendy



Long serving Association Visitor Wendy Gouldthorpe was overwhelmed when the Dream Team showered her with flowers and fizz at the May Drop-in support group meeting.

The well-deserved surprise was a Thank You for her outstanding work in the volunteer role since finishing her training in September 2002.

Branch Chair Andy Jones, who presented the gift, told guests at The Calcot Centre venue: "Our AVs do a wonderful job – many of you in this room have benefited from the support. It's an emotionally challenging and fulfilling role and now and again it gets quite tough. I would like to recognise all the wonderful work that Wendy has done."

Wendy, from Wokingham, was lost for words before telling the MND community: "The reason I do this is because of all the lovely people like you that I meet.

"Thank you for welcoming me into your homes."

She later added how proud she was to belong to such a strong Branch filled with people who care.

Jane Gilbert

JIGSAW by Derek Hince

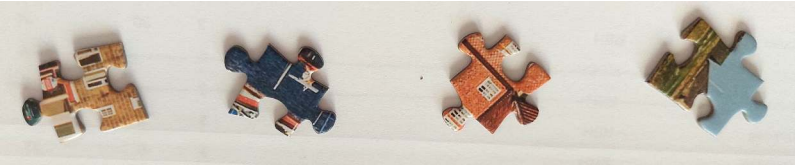


Well done to Derek Hince, of Purley-on-Thames, who has shared this honest poem he penned about his experience of living with MND.

Derek, a former art teacher, had been doing a few jigsaws and realised there were similarities to how his life is now – a deconstructing jigsaw.

His wife Sally says: "He realises there is a bleakness but also honesty about it too."

Derek is pictured in July last year proudly pointing out his newly acquired badge after becoming a member of the 80+ Old Fogies Club!



I am a jigsaw
slowly being taken apart.
Sometimes you don't notice
the missing pieces,
a little less colour,
a decreasing sparkle,
a barely visible change.

When the grip grows stronger
the gaps become obvious.
Fractured, twisted, helplessly unable
to prevent my collapse.
I sense the pieces vanishing
never to be replaced.
Joyous gifts thrown away.

There are pauses
where I scan my remaining fragments,
scattered and jumbled,
trying to make sense of their confusion.
The complete picture has long since
weakened and disappeared,
clarity and vibrancy extinguished.

I watch as some pieces bounce away,
trying to escape the inevitable.
Feeling weary and impotent
I try to remember my past,
the bright life-affirming landscape
I once portrayed,
the pleasures I gave and received.

Small segments still remain,
lying in a circle,
holding on to each other
like a protective shield
around my ever shrinking core.
They do not seem afraid,
exuding strength and support.

I feel myself relax
as I realise we are a family.
We have always linked together
to create a whole.
Now I know they will stay with me
sustaining and carrying me
lovingly to the end.

A spectacular finish by Reading Joggers

Our fantastic partners Reading Joggers set a brilliant pace during the last year raising an incredible £6,514 to help fight MND.

We were over the moon at the big cheque reveal on June 9th and we can't thank them enough for this amazing boost to our vital work supporting local families.

The amazing total raised was a wonderful tribute to two much loved joggers, Andrew Lenaghan and Nicky Sayer, who sadly lost their battle with MND. And both their spouses, Caroline and Dave, attended the wrap at the Cunning Man pub in Burghfield to hear of the fantastic support from the running community.

Some of our Dream Team were also delighted to be able to thank Tracy and Dave Hawkins, who led the fundraising campaign, Chair Jolyon Roe and all the runners involved in the host of innovative and challenging events.

Branch Publicity Officer Jane Gilbert said: "It's fabulous support like this that helps us to make every day matter for local families.

"From supporting quizzes, a car wash, a race night, a marathon and a half marathon, the joggers have been just brilliant.

"Special thanks go to one of the club captains Paula Lees who ran the London Marathon raising £1,243 for the joggers' MND fund."

Jane was able to share that from January – June this year the Branch had spent an incredible £28,050 on a variety of grants supporting local families affected by MND.

"Thank goodness for our supporters who make it possible for the Branch to be proactively awarding support funds for our MND community", she said. "We will be providing many more over the next six months as well."

Look at page 14 to see how we have helped in the first half of this year - you'll be AMAZED!

Jane Gilbert



Reading Joggers Chair Jolyon Roe praises the 'great and compassionate' work of the MND Association's Reading and West Berkshire Branch



Aiming high for a heartfelt cause

A West Berkshire shooting school kindly hosted a special clay day raising a brilliant £800 for the branch.

Pennsport at Curridge, near Newbury, welcomed 32 clients in April for a simulated clay pigeon shoot incorporating a light-hearted 'high bird challenge' into the day.

Organiser Nicholas Penn Junior, who has a family friend living with MND, invited guests to take on some particularly challenging targets.

He said: "It proved to be both entertaining and humbling, and we are delighted to say the challenge raised £800.

"The sunshine even made an appearance which added to the day."

Fantastic support like this helps us to make ever day matter for families affected by MND.

Jane Gilbert



How we spend your donations

The range of support funds awarded and what they are used for is tremendous. In the first six months of this year a magnificent **£28,050** has been awarded from branch funds.

This includes support for massage therapies, counselling, adaptations, disabled equipment, wheelchairs, short breaks for carers, wheelchair accessible taxis to attend medical appointments and social events, children's activities, iPads and communication apps, football season tickets, holidays, air cooling systems to combat the heatwave, spa days, chiropody, gardening and cleaning sessions, days out with the family, a trip to the Peaks to remember a parent and accommodation for a carer in Oxford during a hospital admission.

We are very grateful to Association Visitor Jan Gryglaszewska for compiling this breakdown of support from January – June 2026.

Carers Grants	4 to enable a carer to have a break from their caring role
Wellbeing grants	
Massage therapies	248 sessions
Counselling	24 sessions
Chiropody	12 sessions
Holidays	4 grants of £500 each
Football season tickets	2
Gardening/household items	4 including 2 air cooling systems, regular garden visits and household electrical repairs
Children and Young Person grants	9 of £250 each to support activities and afterschool clubs
Wheelchair taxi journeys	8 to attend medical appointments and drop ins
Everyday living grants - requests via health and social care professionals	
Adaptations	1 contribution towards a downstairs bedroom and wet room
Wheelchair access vehicle	1 contribution towards a wheelchair assisted vehicle
Speech and Language therapy equipment	2 specialist drinking items

Newsletters

If you would like to change the way you receive newsletters (post or email) or if you do not currently receive your own copy and would like to be added to our mailing list (post or email) please contact

Jacqui McGachie: secretary@mndrwb.org



Do you need a wheelchair taxi?

Yellow Cars Ltd is always reliable and friendly

21-23 Boulton Road, Reading, RG2 0NX

Tel: 0118 9666 555

Rocking the night away for Chris

Music fan Chris Cullen, from Wokingham, who is living with MND, enjoyed a magical night to remember at a wonderful summer party in his honour.

His friends Mark and Sarah Pearson laid on five bands for Chris Rocks Fest which was held in a paddock next to their home in Marston, Wiltshire.

The event, supporting the MND Association, was hosted by their actor friend Clive Mantle, best known for TVs Casualty and Game of Thrones.

Mark writes:

"Chris Rocks Fest on June 20th was a huge success. About 320 people attended, the rain held off - a glorious day turned into a magical evening, as the sun set, and the bands kept playing.

"The atmosphere was fantastic; groups of people spread out with their friends or families amongst the apple trees.

"We were all there to celebrate our love for one man, our dearest friend



Chris, pictured above with his lovely wife Anne beside him. He made a wonderful speech and spoke movingly of his life with MND. I don't think there was a dry eye in the house – tears of sadness but also joy.

"We partied till midnight, dancing our sorrows away, and I think everyone will remember a truly wonderful occasion.

"Not only did we have a lot of fun, but we also raised over £20,000 for the MND Association. Our heartfelt thanks to all those who attended or contributed to make this incredible event possible."

After the event Chris also wrote:

"I couldn't have imagined a more perfect day. All the people we care about deeply, both family and friends, in one place. Everyone enjoying the summer warmth, the wonderful music, food and drink. The all-embracing feeling of love was unbelievably moving for both Anne and me. As I said a perfect day."

Jane Gilbert



Chris and Anne's granddaughters Ada and Esme kicked off their shoes and danced the night away

STOP PRESS - As the Newsletter was going to print we had this exciting news from Mark - the fundraising total has now reached £21,000 AND Chris has decided that he would like this awesome amount to come to our local branch. Thank you everyone!

We can help in so many ways . . .

We are the Reading and West Berkshire branch of the Motor Neurone Disease Association, and we are your local point of contact. You might be surprised at how we can help you and people living with MND, their families and carers. We do a lot more than just providing voice banking, fundraising and organising the social events you read about in this newsletter.

We are all volunteers and most of us have had a close connection with MND. We work with professional health care providers to try and ensure people living with MND get the best possible care and advice. We also have a few hard working trained volunteer Association Visitors (AVs) who can offer guidance and support.

Don't be shy, use the contact details so we can discuss with you how we might be able to help.
Email: contact@mndrwb.org Tel: 07760 854975

Dates for 2026:

22nd September

27th October

Drop-in Meetings - An open invitation

You are warmly invited to our Drop-in Meetings

The Calcot Centre, 3 Highview, Calcot,
Reading RG31 4XD
12.30 - 2.30pm

These meetings are an opportunity for to share experiences and thoughts, meet with friends who understand.

We would be very pleased to see you. Please feel free to bring a relative or friend - all are welcome.

RSVP to secretary@mndrwb.org or call 07760 854957.

A selection of sandwiches will be available.

The venue has wheelchair access, toilets and car parking on site.

From junction 12 of the M4 head on the Bath Road (A4) towards Reading. You will pass Sainsbury's/IKEA on your left and in a few hundred yards at the next roundabout take the first exit onto Royal Avenue. Take the 4th road on your left, Highview, and the centre is on the left (signposted). Click here to view venue in Google maps,

Our AMAZING Summer Tea Party is back

Come along to meet our CEO Tanya Curry - think she has heard about our fabulous cakes!



Beansheaf Community Centre, Charrington Road, Calcot, RG31 7AW

Thursday August 13th

To assist with catering please contact Jacqui, secretary@mndrwb.org, or phone the branch contact number below if you would like to attend



ANSWERS

1: Royal Mint 2: Roll over Beethoven 3: Ratatouille (Roland Rat) 4: Gone with the wind 5: The World is Not enough (James Bond book/film) 6: Ruby Tuesday (Ruby Wax/Rolling Stones song) 7: Pregnant Pause 8: Monkey See, Monkey Do 9: The Elephant In The Room 10: Duelling banjos (From the film Deliverance) 11: Lieutenant (left tenant) 12: The Circus is back in town 13: Remit (A stopwatch is a timer) 14: Pearl's a singer (hit for Elkie Brooks 15: Eleanor Rigby 16: Ice Cream 17: Eyesight 18: United States (Ohio/Iowa) 19: Not fade away (Buddy Holly song) 20:Tom Thumb (Character from English folklore

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