

BASINGSTOKE BREAST CANCER SELF HELP GROUP

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

21st JANUARY 2025

Welcome everyone to the 2025 Basingstoke Breast Cancer Self Help Group Annual General Meeting. Apologies: Yvonne Huston, Doreen Bunce, Anne Knight, Bridget Sullivan, Pat Hunt, Sue Seamour, Maggie Shukla, Corrine Thomas and Ann Parry.

This meeting is the start our 22nd year, a huge milestone for us and one of which I am extremely proud. All of us, collectively, can take credit for the success of this group, as without you attending our meetings and telling ladies of the help, friendship and support you have found here, there would be no such group.

As many of you know we are not a registered charity and exist solely on donations from the general public. It is for this reason we hold an AGM every January so you can see where the money that has been donated has been spent. As with all our other meetings it gives you the opportunity to ask questions about the group finances and to make suggestions regarding the running of the group.

REFERRALS

This year we had 26 referrals opposed to 32 last year. The reason for the decrease is last year 5 ladies from the Moving Forward Course joined us at one meeting plus one referral from MacMillan. Referral breakdown:

DTC.		8
DTC Support Worker.	2	
Ladies from the group.	6	
Website.		8
Precious member.	1	
Phone call.	<u>1</u>	
TOTAL		26

ENQUIRIES MADE VIA OUR WEBSITE

As with all messages received from our website I always reply with an offer to speak on the phone or meet for coffee. All except three last year responded to my offer.

GUEST SPEAKERS

As with previous years we continue to have guest speakers at our meetings and last year was no exception. We are most fortunate to have three of the consultants from our hospital plus the nurses from the DTC, who all give up their valuable spare time of an evening, to come and talk to us on a variety of medical issues.

In May we always welcome Mr Kevin Harris, Consultant Surgeon here at our hospital. Mr Harris spoke about the latest surgical techniques, new equipment, the possible use of AI, plus other general information relating to breast cancer. Mr Harris has been our guest speaker for over 18 years, it has been interesting to hear how treatment of breast cancer has changed over this time. As always Mr Harris was very happy to answer ladies' questions which were many and varied.

In September we welcomed for the first time Dr Remer, Oncologist here at our hospital. Dr Remer spoke about the different types of chemotherapy, the side effects of the treatment and the types of chemotherapy offered around the world, all of

which was most interesting. He was very happy to answer all the ladies' questions and has agreed to be our regular speaker each September. We look forward to welcoming him later this year.

October is reserved for the nurses from the DTC. Clare and three of her colleagues came and gave a very interesting power point presentation on their work and what is new in the DTC. Many of us have had first hand experiences of the DTC at the start of our cancer journey and know how very kind these nurses are when we are at our most vulnerable. I know they all speak very highly of our group, encouraging newly diagnosed ladies to contact me. Our date card and brochure are always included in the information pack given to newly diagnosed ladies.

November we welcomed Mrs Rosie Stanton, Consultant Surgeon here at our hospital as the last guest speaker of the year. At Mrs Stanton's request she asked ladies to forward to her specific questions relating to areas of concern they had so she could answer these at the meeting. Afterwards she was very happy to answer general questions about breast cancer, medication, etc. We look forward to welcoming her later this year.

Along with our regular guest speakers, we also enjoyed talks from individuals involved in local organisations throughout the year.

Tony Bamburger, Past President of the Basingstoke Lions, spoke about the work they are involved in both locally and worldwide.

Geoff Sharp, Secretary to the Basingstoke branch of the RSPB spoke about the history of the organisation and its involvement locally.

Lavinia Winch, Ambassador for Yes Yes Yes this is a company that specialises in intimate products. During Lavinia's presentation she told us how these products can help ladies during chemotherapy treatments and the menopause, answering questions on a topic not often spoken about when undergoing treatment. All the ladies found this really helpful.

During the year we have a couple of meetings with no speakers, this gives the ladies an opportunity to chat over coffee.

SOCIAL EVENTS

In May Ann Knight very kindly organised for us to visit the lovely garden of Povey's Cottage, in Ramsdall which is a member of the National Garden Scheme. During our visit the owners told us the history of the cottage and gardens which was most interesting. After a tour of the garden we all sat down and enjoyed tea and cake in the delightful surroundings.

In July 40 friends and family enjoyed an evening cruise on the Basingstoke canal on a lovely summer evening. The following month we held our annual skittles evening and buffet at the Loddon Vale Indoor Bowling club. Both the canal and skittles evenings have become firm favourites with the group and are now regular events in our social calendar.

In September our last social outing of the year was a visit to the National Trust property The Vyne House and gardens which was most enjoyable. We ended our visit with a light lunch.

DONATIONS MADE/RECEIVED

These will be outlined in our Treasurer's report. Grateful thanks to anyone who has donated to group funds, these are very much appreciated. I always send a card of thanks for outside donations made to us.

NEWSLETTER

Liz continues to produce our excellent monthly newsletters which are always very interesting and most informative. These newsletters keep ladies up-dated with social events, group activities, forthcoming speakers, dates of meetings etc. Liz forwards newsletters to ladies via the web or posted to ladies not on the internet.

GROUP WEBSITE

Our website is the group's "shop window" - the aim is to inform the public of who we are and what we do. As a result enquiries regarding the group can be made via the website which Paula forwards into me and I follow up. A few years ago Paula redesigned our website making it modern and relevant to people wanting to know more about the group, this is especially helpful to newly diagnosed ladies. At the beginning of the year Paula uploads a full list of dates and forthcoming speakers for the year. During the year Paula uploads the minutes from our monthly meetings, our newsletters, along with photographs of social outings etc. I am very proud of our website, it is an integral part of the group which allows information to be viewed both locally and nationally. Grateful thanks to you Paula for all your invaluable help and suggestions keeping our website updated and relevant throughout the year. I and all the ladies really appreciate it.

ANNUAL CAKE SALE

Many thanks to Paula (who looks after our website) for giving us permission to hold our annual cake sale outside the Health Information Point again last year. Another successful year when over £200 was raised for group funds. Grateful thanks to all who donated cakes and Liz, Maureen, Lyn for helping.

COFFEE AFTER 5KYW

A small group of ladies continue to be members of 5KYW which meet in the Memorial Park on the last Saturday morning of the month to run/jog/walk as much as we are able. Liz arranged with the owner of Gaberdines, a local coffee shop, for us to meet for chat and catch up afterwards. Everyone is welcome. You do not have to be a member of 5KYW to have coffee with us.

I would like to thank you all for your continued support in making this group so special.

A lot has happened in the intervening 22 years - new friendships have been made, our individual journey of recovery from breast cancer has been helped by the support we have had from one another. I know you will continue to welcome new ladies to the group helping them to move on with their lives at a difficult time. I look forward to the year ahead with you all having fun and laughter in this very special group.

Angela Bennett - Founder