

Basingstoke Breast Cancer Self-help Group

Minutes of the monthly meeting held 19 May 2026

Chairman: Angela Bennett

Treasurer: Renee Smith

Newsletter: Liz Janes

Secretary: Heather Bounaouara

24 ladies attended

Welcome

Angela welcome everyone to the meeting, including three new members – Shirley, Fiona and Caroline.

Speakers

Mr Kevin Harris, consultant breast surgeon, now based at Royal Hampshire County Hospital in Winchester, gave us a very interesting talk on developments on surgery and treatments for breast cancer.

Diagnostics are improving – CT scans which give a 3D image are in use in Winchester.

Overall, less extensive breast surgery is done now. Approximately only 15% of women diagnosed with breast cancer have mastectomy. Breast reconstruction is often done at the same time as the surgery to remove the tumour.

Patients are sometimes referred to Portsmouth or Salisbury for more complex reconstruction and plastic surgery.

Radiotherapy is short now – generally a five-day course. A new radiotherapy machine has just been installed in Basingstoke. The Radiotherapy Centre is managed by University Hospitals Southampton (UHS).

Fewer lymph nodes are being removed these days, sometimes sentinel nodes only, with a subsequent reduction in lymphoedema.

Depending on the type of breast cancer, targeted chemotherapy such as Abemaciclib or Ribociclib for oestrogen-positive, HER2 negative

cancers. This is instead of standard chemotherapy and involves taking a tablet twice a day for two years.

Treatments for secondary breast cancer are also developing and progressing more quickly now. This is mainly chemotherapy, radiotherapy and supportive care, so that it tends to be managed as a chronic illness.

Upcoming events

Speakers for the rest of the year are listed on the back of our monthly newsletter. If anyone has any ideas or requests for speakers for 2027, please let Jane Bishop know, and include their contact details if possible. Posy Mudie has kindly agreed to come back next year.

Next month's meeting – 23 June – is now a general meeting and Doreen has kindly agreed to put together a quiz.

To be confirmed – Doreen has made enquiries at Whitchurch Silk Mill. 20 or more people are needed to book a guided tour at either 10.30am or 2.30pm. These take about an hour and cover the history of the mill, the water wheel, the looms and an exhibition of the woven silk. Admission is £13.50 for over 60s or £14.50 for under 60s.

Friday 17 July – Maggie has confirmed the annual Basingstoke Canal trip. The boat will leave promptly at 7pm from Waterwitch Wharf, Odiham. You are welcome to bring your own food, but please buy drinks from the bar on board.

Tuesday 18 August - the usual monthly meeting will be replaced by the annual buffet supper and skittles evening at Loddon Vale Indoor Bowling Club which Liz Janes has organised. This is open to family and friends and the charge for the buffet remains at £10 per person. A bar is also available for drinks.

Friday 11 September 11.30 am - there is an exhibition and talk about 'Wild Flowers & Nature' in Winchester Cathedral. Cost £19.00 people interested in going could travel there by train from Basingstoke.

Saturday 21 November 2026 Dinner dance at Loddon Vale Indoor Bowling Club. Liz Janes is kindly organising this again but would be grateful if members could begin to request raffle prizes and also collect auction prizes. Liz to confirm if funds raised will go to the BBCSHG or the Basingstoke Prostate Cancer group. Maximum number of people: 60. Open to Loddon Vale bowlers and BBCSHG people & families.

Entrance £30 per person. Music provided by Louis and Paula as before. Three course dinner by the same chefs as last year.

Treasurer's report

Renee announced that she is resigning as Treasurer from the end of the year, December 2026. Angela thanked Renee for her sterling long service in this role.

Angela asked anyone interested in taking over from Renee to please contact her, Angela.

Any other business

1. The Winchester & Eastleigh Cancer Support Group had a visit from Professor Anne MacGregor, St Bartholomews Hospital, London on 12th May 2026 to which BBCSHG members were invited. Prof. MacGregor gave a talk about menopause issues affecting women with cancer. One of the people who attended took notes. These are available on request from Angela.
2. Angela confirmed that the BBCSHG is now permitted to continue using a room in The Ark once a month for its evening meetings. And the car park is also available to Speakers and people attending.
3. However, the hospital will no longer permit outside organisations to hold cake sales in the hospital so unless an alternative venue can be found this will not take place this year.
4. Angela has received a request from the Breast Unit for volunteers to assist in a questionnaire based pilot study being led by a consultant breast surgeon and research team at Hampshire Hospitals (HHFT) who are developing a Patient-Reported Outcome Measure tool in Breast Lymphoedema (BL PROMS). The volunteers who have in the past had primary breast conservation surgery and radiotherapy with or without axillary surgery, would be asked to take part in a workshop on Monday 29th June at 2pm to help develop the questionnaire. Names and contact details to be sent to Angela please by 30th May - she will pass these on to the research team.
5. St Michael's Hospice Summer Memories special appeal - the BBCSHG is making a donation of £180 in memory of past members. St Michael's was recently given 'Outstanding' rating by the CQC.
6. Insurance for the group - Angela is waiting for the hospital to confirm that the group is still covered by hospital insurance.
7. Next year's date cards have been ordered.

8. If anyone has a forthcoming big birthday milestone please let Angela know so that the group can celebrate this together.

Date of next meeting: Tuesday 23 June 2026 at The Ark, Basingstoke & North Hampshire Hospital.

The meeting closed at 8pm.