

Chief Executive's letter

March 2024

mike.seaton@nhsrf.org.uk

Introduction

It's good to feel that spring is round the corner at last after a long winter. I'm sure the thoughts of many members are turning towards activities with your friends in branches and the wider Fellowship as well as holidays (don't forget the discounts we offer on travel insurance and a range of holidays as well).

I'm also looking forward to getting out and about to meet members in branch meetings with visits lined up to Manchester, Huddersfield, Warrington, Cosham, Harrogate, Bristol and Bromley.

There's been plenty going on behind the scenes at the Fellowship since my last newsletter in December with just a snapshot of the activity captured here. My thanks as always go to the staff, Members Council and trustees for all that they do to support our members.

I hope you all have a very Happy Easter and enjoy the long weekend.

NHS England

I am delighted to say that our recent grant application to NHS England has been approved and we will shortly receive a donation of £50,000. This money is not able to be used towards our core operating costs but is to help finance systems, create a new website and purchase equipment to make the Fellowship more secure and sustainable in the future.

Staffing structure

As members may be aware, over the last few months the Board of Trustees have been reviewing the structure of the staff team to ensure that it is affordable and will help the Fellowship to move forward in the future. There are three updates I now need to inform members of:

- I am pleased to announce the appointment of Lynda McKie as our new Fellowship Support Officer for Scotland. Lynda is based in Dumfries and will be working the equivalent of one day a week supporting existing branches, exploring opportunities to open new branches and developing links with NHS Scotland.
- As Chief Executive I am employed for 15 hours a week and am therefore not always available. In order to help with the running of the Fellowship and to provide greater support to our members, volunteers and staff, a new part-time post of Chief Operating Officer (COO) has

been created which will provide day-to-day leadership and oversight of the finance and operations and will act as deputy in my absence. This post is currently being advertised on www.charityjob.co.uk

- Once the COO is in post a further review of staff roles and responsibilities will be undertaken.

Anyone with questions and queries relating to this structure should contact me directly.

P60 newsletter

We have been working with NHS Pensions to secure inclusion in their annual newsletter to all NHS pension holders (more than 1.2million!). A very small article promoting the Fellowship and highlighting how people can join will be landing on people's doormats from mid April onwards. This may result in more enquiries at branch level as people visit the website to see where their nearest branch is or via enquiries received into the Central Office. I will of course report back on whether this activity does result in an increase in members but we know anecdotally that people do reference this document – and the larger P60 campaign from two years ago – when applying for membership. I hope new members will receive a warm welcome from local branches.

Print and postage costs

Effective communication is vital to helping our membership feel connected and part of the fellowship. Printing and postage costs are continuing to rise, and I am therefore asking that if you do have an email address and haven't shared it with us yet, please do so and then we can keep in touch with you much quicker and easier as well as more cost effectively and sustainably for the environment.

I've also included direct links to articles on our website in many of the news items in this bulletin. I understand this isn't going to help if you are reading this in a print version so if there is something you want to read and you aren't able to access our website online, please speak with a committee member if you attend a local branch or the Central Office team if you are a postal member and they will be able to help you.

We know this approach isn't going to suit everyone and that's absolutely fine but the more members sign up to email, the quicker our financial position continues to improve.

Branch and member handbook

Following discussions at Members Council and the Board of Trustees, a final version of the branch handbook is now available on the website. This will be followed by a series of documents aimed at helping improve targeted communications for members. Any comments on the handbook or any of the member communications documents should be directed to Lucia Hiden

(comms@nhsrf.org.uk). My thanks go to everyone who worked hard to develop the handbook and you can find a direct link to it [here](#)

Fellowship holiday

I am pleased to share information about the annual Fellowship holiday which this year will take place from September 11 – 18 in Lake Garda, Italy. The cost will be £1,300 from Gatwick (departure at other airports will be available with a slight variation on the cost). All excursions are included in this price. Anyone wanting to reserve a place or find out more details should contact Lorraine Taylor at lorrainetaylor321@btinternet.com

Events for postal members

I am delighted that the postal members team is able to follow up on its previously successful Zoom based events and is now inviting postal members to three more talks to be held this season.

On **Tuesday April 30th at 10am** Deborah Manger, a former specialist in special care dentistry will be talking about *Accessing Dental Services and Maximising your Oral Health*.

On **Thursday May 23rd at 10am**, Fellowship member and retired clinical psychologist turned our very own crime writer, Barbara Fagan Speake, will talk about *Crime Writing* and her series of novels featuring Detective Annie Macpherson.

Finally on **Thursday June 13th at 10am** postal members will hear from Marilyn Bell, a retired research midwife with a varied career on '*Becoming Accidental Orcadians*' about the magic of Orkney.

All postal members are invited to take part in these events so please do sign up for any or all of these talks by emailing Barbara Kolator, one of your postal member representatives on the Members Council, at Barbara@nhsrf.org.uk to register and for a zoom link. Any branch members who would like to form a reserve list should contact Lucia Hiden at comms@nhsrf.org.uk

I hope the sessions are enjoyable and interesting and I look forward to hearing the feedback.

Search continues for trustees and regional representatives

At such a critical time of change for the Fellowship, it is vital that the members' voice is at the centre of everything we do. Two of the most important ways in which you can have your say and influence decision-making is to join the Members Council or to become a trustee.

You can find out more about these roles [here](#) for trustees and [here](#) for Members Council or you can speak with Lorraine Taylor for Members Council enquiries and Chris Kitchin for trustees enquiries – both are contactable via the Central Office.

Social media

The Fellowship now has a profile on the LinkedIn social media platform. We will be using this for engaging with our NHS partners and stakeholders and raising awareness of who we are and how we can support the NHS. You can find us by searching for @NHS Retirement Fellowship.

Your branch activities should continue to be shared on the Facebook page which I'm delighted to say now has more than 4,500 members and followers.

Fred Olsen cruise winner

I was delighted when Christine McCrudden contacted the team to tell us about the marvelous adventures she and her husband enjoyed recently on the Dutch Waterways. Those of you who were at conference will remember that Christine was the lucky winner of the free cruise which we were able to raffle thanks to our partners at Fred Olsen Cruises. Christine clearly had a wonderful time and you can read more about her adventures [here](#). Don't forget that all Fellowship members get a 5% discount off cruise bookings with Fred Olsen plus a further 5% discount on repeat bookings. And they have recently added a free afternoon tea onboard for all our members too. You can telephone the booking line on 0800 0355 108. Don't forget to have your NHSRF membership card to hand.

Newham member publishes memoirs

Congratulations go to our Newham member Charlotte Osho who was so inspired by a visiting speaker to her branch meeting that she decided to write her own memoirs which have now been published. Charlotte and her daughter Andi are happy to come and speak at branches across London and the south east and you can contact them via our own head of comms Lucia at comms@nhsrf.org.uk. You can read more about Charlotte's mesmerising journey [here](#).

Benevolent Fund

Don't forget that all members who have been with the Fellowship for a year or more are eligible to apply for assistance from the Benevolent Fund if you meet the criteria. I would strongly urge you to do so if you are in need of a little extra support and can assure you that all enquiries are dealt with in strict confidence. For further information, speak with Sherry in the Central Office or have a look at the information [here](#).

Obituaries

Sadly I do need to inform all members of the deaths of four of our members.

Waple Baird

Waple was a long standing, active and supportive member the past nine years of St George's, Merton and Wandsworth branch. Her NHS career spans general nurse training at Ashcroft Hospital, Southampton and a trained midwife at Ninewells Hospital, Dundee, Scotland. She was a practice nurse specialist and family

planning specialist at several London hospitals including the Royal Brompton and Kings College as well a number of private clinics.

Waple was admitted to St George's Hospital after very suddenly becoming unwell on 6th March, she passed away peacefully on the 8th of March.

Darling Bhairo

Darling Bhairo was a cardiothoracic nurse in the cardiac theatres at St George's Hospital in London and was also a long standing member of the St George's, Merton and Wandsworth branch. She passed away peacefully at the end of January.

June Haverson

June was a much-valued member of the South Tees branch who died in January. She was branch secretary and then chair until the last six months of her life. She will be greatly missed by the branch.

Pamela Shepherd

Pamela was a long-standing, founder member of the St George's, Merton & Wandsworth branch. Pam was diagnosed with a high-grade, bifrontal glioma (an aggressive form of brain tumour) in November 2023. She passed peacefully on Friday 16 February 2024.

My condolences go to their families and friends within the branches.

Central Office contact details: telephone 01305 361 317, email sherry.smith2@nhs.net or Debbie.arnold4@nhs.net