

Notes: Sidmouth Group NEDPSA Meeting Monday 18 May 2015.

We met at our usual venue, the Royal York and Faulkner Hotel. We met in our new room, the hotel bar area, which provided us with more space, albeit with some hidden corners. We had 18 people come to the meeting including our 2 speakers.

Bex Snell, Urology Services Manager accompanied by Jane Billing, Urology/Oncology Nurse Specialist were our speakers. Bex Snell spent 7 years in Orthopaedics before coming to work in Urology two and a half years ago. Two weeks after joining this department her uncle was diagnosed with prostate cancer so the team were able to inform her on all things prostate. The Da Vinci machine arrived at the same time which meant more patients coming into the Urology department so it grew much faster and thus much busier than other departments. Bex said she found this a big challenge and is grateful for 'a good and dynamic team' which comprises 6.6 consultants and 3 surgeons. Both Bex and Jane are thrilled with the PSA Tracker purchased a year ago which enables them to monitor patients who are 'watchful waiting'. The PSA is taken at a patient's GP surgery every 3 months, then flagged to the RD&E where it is checked by a nurse. Bex said that 220 patients had already been monitored in this way. The MacMillan initiative 'Living with and beyond cancer' and the Force Centre's health and wellbeing clinics for newly diagnosed patients with any cancers were also mentioned. Bex spoke about the Urology Trust Fund for which she is responsible and which is used for providing services for patients. Funding has now been approved for another Urology/Oncology Nurse Specialist.

There were many questions before Bex and Jane were thanked warmly for their informative input.

Members were reminded of the meeting in Barnstaple on Thursday 16 July And our next Sidmouth meeting on Monday 7 September when Bill Lankester, founder of Sidmouth Living with Cancer will join us.

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Notes: Sidmouth Group NEDPSA Meeting Monday 7th September 2015.

Clive Pryke introduced Evelyn and Bill Lankester who founded Sidmouth Living with Cancer in 2001. Bill spoke with great passion of how lucky he considered himself, surviving serious road accidents, the traumatic events following his mother's death, his diagnosis of bowel cancer, and the success of his businesses in Sidmouth and Seaton.

Whilst coffees were organised, Ken MacDiarmid asked for members to join the main committee which had lost several members this year. The committee was in danger of folding which would mean no newsletters, no cards for newly-diagnosed men, and no meetings at the Isca Centre. Terry Fuller, who had taken on the role of Sidmouth group leader, during the illness and subsequent death of David Jannaway, asked for someone to replace him, since he planned to help out on the main committee.

Bill Lankester continued. After 6 months of successful chemotherapy, he asked himself what he could do to help others. He and Evelyn organised

a service at All Saints Church followed by a meal for 30 people who were or had been affected by cancer and this led to the formation of a group. Fifteen years later the group still has 11 of the original 23 members. Members meet on the second Thursday of every month with a speaker. In 2010 they raised the money, helped by a Sidmouth Herald appeal, to buy their own minibus. Living with Cancer has an impressive social calendar with an event each week including coach trips, holidays, mini-bus outings, and a lunch club. The group provides financial assistance to people in the Sidmouth area undergoing treatment, will pay for hotel accommodation for patients' families so they can be with their loved ones, and on occasion even pay the cost of fares and accommodation for those who have to travel abroad for treatment. Bill said that he believes he was kept alive in order to help others. Evelyn spoke of the many friendships made within the group. Bill generously offered the use of the SLWC mini-bus to our Sidmouth group and equipment. He also said that our members would be very welcome at their meetings. There are no membership charges. At this point, one of our members, who is also a member of SLWC, informed us that Bill had been Sidmouth Citizen of the Year and had been awarded the MBE. Roy Quastel mentioned a screening project that NEDPSA has organised.

Evelyn and Bill were thanked very warmly, for their talk, and for the incredible amount of work they put into Sidmouth Living with Cancer.

Members were reminded of the next ISCA meeting in Exeter on Thursday 15 October. Ken MacDiarmid appealed again for members to join the main committee and for a new leader for the Sidmouth group.

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Sidmouth Group Meeting Monday 16 November 2015.

We met at our usual venue, the Royal York and Faulkner Hotel. Our speaker was Annie Kerr, Patient Support and Information Nurse at the Force Cancer Charity.

Before introducing Annie, Terry Fuller, who has lead the group since the losses of David Jannaway and John Perratt, repeated his request for someone to take on the running of the group. He gave the date for the next meeting at the Isca Centre, Exeter. He drew attention to an article in the Prostate Matters magazine and the recent 'Classics Galore' concert held to raise funds for Force.

Joan Bourgourd donated unused, useful items.

A minute's silence was observed for the victims of the Paris terrorist attacks.

Annie told us she had been working at the Royal Devon and Exeter Hospital for 16 years and joined Force 18 months ago. Force (Friends of the Oncology and Radiotherapy Centre, Exeter) was founded in 1987 by Dr. Chris Frowling. Following an appeal, money was raised to build the Force Centre in 2004. The charity's role is to support people diagnosed with cancer and their families. Annie outlined the services which the Centre provides including counselling, complementary therapies, and a 'tailor-made' physiotherapy programme for patients. There is a well-stocked library for browsing and borrowing and the attractive, comfortable seating area overlooking the lovely garden where coffee/teas are available. £1.25 million is needed to run the Force Centre per year. Force is now working with the RD&E for men who are newly diagnosed with prostate cancer, offering them a health and wellbeing clinic in a group session of up to 30 people. MacMillan Cancer Support works with Force to provide advice on benefits and obtaining a MacMillan grant. Those present who have visited the Force Centre have found it very welcoming, a

peaceful place to be whilst waiting for or between hospital appointments or just somewhere to relax. For those who had not, Annie's talk would surely encourage a visit.

Terry asked about Force's Outreach programme. Annie told us it is to be launched on February 14 in Tiverton and is funded by a legacy. Other questions followed. Roy asked if Force made newly-diagnosed men aware of the NEDPSA phone list where contact can be made with another who is having or has received the same treatment.

The meeting ended with Annie being warmly thanked for her talk.

Jennifer Jannaway

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