



We aim to advance the health of people living with neurological conditions



Our programme on how to live well with Neurological Conditions came to Auchterarder - there's a full report on page 6

Some of what's in our summer newsletter

- Who we are
- Plans to restart in September – new season of meetings
- Neuro Central Gallery
- ***In the Spotlight*** - Myalgic Encephalomyelitis (ME)
- Feature by Katy Page, Neurological Physiotherapist
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Who are Neuro Central?



Neuro Central is a charity based in Central Scotland which was set up in 2016 by a group of friends who all have a neurological condition.



Our mission is to ensure that people in Scotland who live with neurological conditions, their carers and families have access to high quality services and therapies, information and support in a friendly relaxed environment, so no one has to feel alone.

We encourage diversity and welcome everyone regardless of ability, race, gender, age (although those under 16 must be accompanied by an adult), religion, identity, and sexual orientation.

If you are affected by a neurological condition, why not consider coming along to our drop-in sessions in Stirling or Auchterarder?

Our friendly qualified therapists will be available offering therapy sessions at no cost to you (subject to availability). We also have refreshments, and there are always people up for a chat!

And if you like what you find, please join and support us as a member. This can give you access to our members' weekly email and [Facebook page](#) where we post regular information about our events.

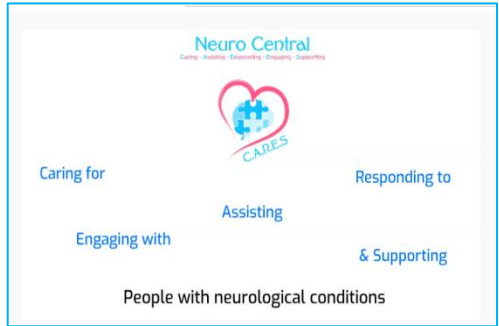
For more information about us, to find out about volunteering, or to donate and support us, please get in touch by:

- Visiting our website neurocentral.org.uk
- Emailing our Secretary at secretary@neurocentral.org.uk, or
- Telephoning 07526 281747.

We look forward to meeting you!

Neuro Central Animation

For your essential information about Neuro Central, please watch this short animation. You can find it on the home page of our website neurocentral.org.uk.



Or you can go directly to the video at youtu.be/31AecMVAAbA8

Neuro Central Online

Because the Covid virus is still in the community, we recognise that not everyone is comfortable with meeting face-to-face. We will therefore be continuing for now with Neuro Central Online using Zoom to offer a variety of sessions. These include Neuro Physio, Relaxation and Mindfulness. As we move into the shorter days of the year, it also gives our members the opportunity to join in from the comfort of their home.



Details of the sessions are posted on our members' Facebook page and emailed to them each week. If you would like to join in but are not sure how to, please contact the Secretary by email at secretary@neurocentral.org.uk and we will arrange for some help with using Zoom.

A New Season of Meetings

After our summer break, we will be restarting face-to-face meetings in both Stirling and Auchterarder in September. Dates and times are given on our website and included in weekly emails to our members. To protect those who attend, we will still be asking you to take precautions against Covid which can be found on our website. Our therapists will be back to provide their usual therapies. And we are also arranging a full programme of events which include:

Stirling

- 05 September: Laura Neill – The Live Your Life Team at Strathcarron Hospice
- 03 October: Annual General Meeting followed by entertainment including the return of Juke Box Bingo
- 07 November: Sound Therapy
- 05 December: Christmas Extravaganza

- Spring 2023: Living Well with Neurological Conditions

Auchterarder

We don't yet have any specific dates but plans are in hand for

- Pottery – make your own pots
- Mental Health First Aid – 12-hour Course – see below for details
- Neuro Physio Exercise in person

Mental Health First Aid Course

Neuro Central volunteers and members, who have lived experience of chronic illness, have indicated their interest in taking part in a 'Mental Health First Aid' to build up their skills to offer peer support and also raise their own awareness of mental health.

We are offering this course to volunteers and members to build up skills to offer peer support and give them the confidence to identify

at-risk individuals and support them to access appropriate help. We also have access to a qualified counsellor to ensure nobody is dealing with difficult circumstances on their own.

Ultimately, everyone will benefit from this. It will enable Neuro Central to be responsive to the needs of our members and enhance the support we offer.

Location: St Margaret's Hospital Outpatients, Auchterarder

Time: 6-8pm

Dates: Tuesdays 4th, 11th and 18th October
Thursday 27th October
Thursdays 3rd and 10th November

Places are limited, so, if you are interested, please contact Sheila Doogan by email at sheila.doogan@neurocentral.org.uk to let her know.

A Reminder about Access to Neurological Physiotherapy

If you are in need of immediate physiotherapy and awaiting an appointment from an NHS Physiotherapist, Neuro Central may be able to help.

You can download Information on How to Access Physiotherapy from our website at neurocentral.org.uk/therapists. This provides a link to the information which identifies the criteria you need to meet. If you think this applies to your situation, you will then need to contact us to confirm if we are able to provide funding for this treatment.

It is important to note that this is not an unlimited service. We are only able to make it available to Neuro Central members. However, it is subject to availability through funding received via various grants made to Neuro Central.

Living Well with Neurological Conditions in Auchterarder

Neuro Central was successful with a grant application to Perth and Kinross Community Investment Fund. This allowed us to provide a 10-session Living Well with Neurological Conditions (LWwNC) programme as part of our well-being programme for our members.



Sessions included:

- Physiotherapy
- Getting the right benefits
- Talking Therapy
- Acupuncture / Acupressure
- Living better with neurological conditions
- Podiatry
- Art Therapy
- Mental Health First Aid
- Social Prescribing and Future Goals
- Writing for well-being

We had two therapists at each session and, thanks to the funding, we were able to provide lunch, enhancing our members' wellbeing! It was a lot of hard work setting up the programme and Heather and Sheila are to be congratulated for its success. We asked for feedback and had a lot of positive comments and appreciation:

- The therapies were a lovely bonus and I found they eased my joints.
- The talks were well resourced from the physiotherapy and acupuncture. I appreciated the teas.
- We both go away with more positive feel. I very much appreciate the dedication and effort to all who organise and deliver within the Neuro Central session.
- Your caring, enthusiastic and supportive approach shines through. It helped accepting difficulties.

It was important to us that the LWwNC programme would have a legacy beyond the sessions. To meet this aim, we were able to provide informational resources for each participant at each session. These included The Wellbeing Journal, painting pots, and foot files.

So, a great success with our participants reporting that the LWwNC programme has been beneficial to them in dealing with the multiple issues that affect people with neurological conditions.

Living Well with Neurological Conditions in Stirling

Following on from the success of the programme in Auchterarder, we were successful in applying for funding to offer parts of the programme in Stirling. This will take place in Spring 2023 with a venue and dates to be confirmed.

Katy Page - Neurological Physiotherapist

Exercise, is it for me? Hello, I'm Katy. I am a Specialist Physiotherapist and have worked in the field of Neurology for over 12 years. I became involved with Neuro Central a few years ago and have been delivering a weekly physio-led exercise class for members. I have thoroughly enjoyed this, both the in-person classes pre-COVID and the online classes since. All will know the general benefits that exercise can bring; bulging biceps, rippling sixpack, slender thighs and a smile from ear to ear (you may want to look up some of these claims of course!), but can and should you exercise if you have a neurological condition?

In relation to Parkinson's Disease (PD), exercises prescribed by your physiotherapist can offset the effects of PD to minimise deterioration in strength, endurance, flexibility and balance. Movement strategies can be taught to overcome difficulty in generating automatic movement and thought too. These findings

have helped inform best practice guidelines. There is also emerging evidence that alterations in neurotransmission within the nervous system can be induced with exercise and may mitigate the changes that occur in the basal ganglia, the brain area affected in PD.

Multiple Sclerosis (MS) is another neurological condition that many members have first-hand experience of, which can bring mobility, balance, fatigue and spasticity difficulties. There is a strong body of evidence which demonstrates that exercise used as part of a rehabilitation programme can increase activity levels and improve health and wellbeing. Randomised controlled trials of exercise programmes completed by people living with MS have demonstrated benefits in muscle strength, cardiovascular fitness, aerobic thresholds and activity levels and functional improvements such as walking ability. Preliminary research also suggests that exercise may have a neuroprotective effect and slow the neurodegenerative changes that can be seen in MS.

PD and MS are of course just two of many neurological conditions, but I hope using these two examples has gone some way to demonstrate that exercising with a neurological condition has the potential to lead to positive change, not just to your symptoms but the function of the nervous system too.

If you are feeling inspired and wish to sample the exercise class, please follow the link youtu.be/r21-pG2X4oU. If you wish to find out more about the company I work for or would like to arrange an assessment of your needs and find out what physiotherapy could offer, the website to look up is neurophysioscotland.co.uk.

Hope to see you all again soon.

Katy Page
Specialist Physiotherapist
NEUROPhysio Scotland

Neuro Central Open Day in Auchterarder

We were delighted to welcome back both new and old Neuro Central members to St. Margaret's Outpatients in June. This



followed an extended absence as a result of necessary precautions taken by the hospital because of Covid. St. Margaret's is a great place for our members as it provides accommodation that is accessible and has space to suit our needs.

To celebrate our return, we held an open day providing massage, reflexology, specialist foot care, and art therapy. There was also an opportunity to sign up for courses such as Pottery, Mental Health First Aid and Neuro Physio Exercise. And as always there was time



for chat and catching up over refreshments and home baking.

Neuro Central would like to thank Auchterarder Parish Church who kindly let us use their hall while we were unable to be in St Margaret's. We greatly appreciated the welcome and assistance given us.

In the spotlight

“Neurological disorders are diseases of the central and peripheral nervous system. In other words, the brain, spinal cord, cranial nerves, peripheral nerves, nerve roots, autonomic nervous system, neuromuscular junction and muscles.” World Health Organization



Myalgic encephalomyelitis (ME)

12 May 2022 was the first ever World ME Day. It was marked in the UK by a pioneering ministerial statement from the Department of Health and Social Care on Myalgic Encephalomyelitis. The statement set out the UK Government’s intention to develop a cross-Government delivery plan on ME/CFS for England, aligning with other devolved nations as appropriate. This will begin with the Secretary of State co-chairing a roundtable with the Department’s Chief Scientific Adviser to bring together experts on ME/CFS, including people with lived experience to discuss what needs to happen next. It is then intended that later this year the governments will develop a delivery plan to understand how to improve experiences and outcomes for sufferers.

Action for ME is a charity whose vision is a world without ME. In their response to the statement, they said that for too long people with ME have struggled to get their condition diagnosed, understood and acknowledged. On the first World ME Day, it is fantastic to see that this devastating and disabling condition is being explicitly acknowledged by Government as a priority. This announcement complements the work undertaken by Action for ME through their Priority Setting Partnership, where people of all ages with ME have identified their Top 10 list of priorities that would have most impact on their lives to shape future research.

Later in the month, the All-Party Parliamentary Group (chaired by a Glasgow MP) on Myalgic Encephalomyelitis released its report “Rethinking ME”. The report’s main recommendation (of 20) is that the UK and Devolved Governments must each conduct a comprehensive review of current ME service provision with a view to implementing the new NICE ME guideline recommendations in full and creating strategies to transform the approach towards ME in health, welfare, social care, research and education.

Neuro Central Volunteering Opportunities

Neuro Central is run by a committee of volunteers and is overseen by a board of Trustees. We would not be able to operate without our volunteers. They are an invaluable part of our committee who assist the trustees to run the charity. We also have volunteers who attend our events, assist at our members’ sessions and help with fundraising events.

We have the following opportunities to join our team of volunteers.

Funding (Grants) Co-ordinator - Voluntary Role

We are seeking a volunteer to assist with some or all of the activities below:

- Applying for grants for Neuro Central.
- Identifying any funding opportunities that may benefit Neuro Central to achieve its purpose.
- Liaising with the board/committee to seek out relevant grants, responding to identified funding priorities.
- Writing bids to charities’ foundations and local fund providers.
- Keeping records of grants applied for and feedback on successes.

Volunteer Support to our Sessions

Can you spare some time to support our sessions? We need some help with setting up and serving refreshments (tea/coffee) for our members. Maybe you are good at chatting – our members like a blether too. And at some meetings we have activities which it would be great if you could help support.

Volunteer Gift Aid Administrator

Neuro Central wants to encourage our donors to sign up for Gift Aid. This would give us a big potential to enhance how much we raise to make a difference to those affected by neurological conditions.

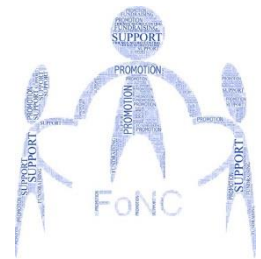
However, to do this, we need to set up and run a Gift Aid scheme. This is a UK Government scheme which allows charities to reclaim the tax on donations made by UK taxpayers. It would mean that our charity gets an extra 25% extra from all such donations, and at no cost to the donor.

Please get in touch if you can volunteer to help us maximise our donations to Neuro Central.

Friends of Neuro Central

If you are only able to help occasionally, could you become a Friend of Neuro Central?

Friends of Neuro Central (FoNC) are recruited from Neuro Central members, their family, friends, and supporters. Rather than holding a designated role within Neuro Central they make up an additional pool of volunteers. We call upon them when help and support is required such as for fundraising events and promotional activities. We hope to restart many such events following the disruption caused by Covid and your help will be more essential than ever.



Each Friend will have a named contact offering support and organising requests for Friends of Neuro Central support. We ask FoNC volunteers to abide by the standards outlined in the Neuro Central Volunteering Policy. You are also entitled to reasonable expenses incurred while volunteering with Friends of Neuro Central.

Trustees

The trustees are responsible for the general control, direction and management of Neuro Central. We would welcome the involvement of more trustees to spread the load and bring wider experience. If you are interested, please see our appeal on the back page of this newsletter.



Many hands make light work, so, if you have some time to spare, why not join our group of friendly volunteers and make a difference to people with Neurological Conditions

If you are interested in any of these volunteer positions, please contact **Sheila Doogan, our Volunteer Organiser, either by email at sheila.doogan@neurocentral.org.uk or call 07526 281747**

Recent Volunteers

We welcome our most recent volunteers.

- Claire Hamilton Support to Stirling sessions
- Eilidh Stults Minutes Secretary and support to Stirling sessions
- Jack Ferguson Assistant Social Media and Marketing Volunteer
- Annie Brough Friends of Neuro Central Stirling
- Margaret Guthrie Support to Auchterarder sessions

Trading Standards Search Dogs

We were delighted to welcome Bobby from Consumer Protection Dogs along to our meeting at Stirling Cricket Club on 20 June, our last meeting before the summer break.

The two dogs, Rosie and Boo, were charged with finding tobacco which Bobby had earlier hidden in a rucksack behind tables. The dogs had no problem locating the gear in the challenging environment, which was especially impressive for the younger dog, Rosie, who took it in her stride as you can see in the following link: fb.watch/dNqVbOXjWj



Green Fingers!

One of our members, Eric Westland from Sauchie, is a keen gardener who enjoys growing plants from seed. At our last meeting held at Stirling County Cricket Club in June, Eric brought along a variety of small plants for anyone to take away. Among the selection were peas, leeks, chard and basil.



I am, sadly, infamous for killing any plants which I receive as presents but I decided to give these a go. The chard is the gift that keeps giving and the peas are lovely and sweet but never make it to the kitchen. Below are photos I took of my chard and pea plants, I hope you are impressed. Move over Monty Don!

Thanks Eric.

Jackie Paterson

Grants

Co-op Local Community Fund

Many thanks to the Auchterarder and Community Co-op and their customers for supporting Neuro Central to raise a grand total of £4,014.68!

Heather and Sheila collected this cheque on our behalf at a presentation in Auchterarder on Friday 19 November 2021.



Arnold Clark Community Fund Stirling

We are very grateful to have received £2,000 to run a Living Well with Neurological Conditions course in Stirling. We will be running this course in Spring 2023.



Perth & Kinross Community Investment Fund

We were grateful to receive £6,000 from Perth & Kinross Council to run a Living Well with Neurological Conditions Programme in Auchterarder.

We are also pleased to be able to run a Mental Health First Aid course thanks to a further £2,000 grant. We are running this course in the autumn in Auchterarder.

Fundraising and Donations

David Wallace donates £600 to Neuro Central after epic attempt at a Double Ramsay Round

Setting out on 25 June 2021, David attempted a Double Ramsay Round. Starting in Fort William, his challenge was to climb 46 Munros within 48 hours. This is a distance of 188 kilometres and an ascent of 17,380 metres (almost the equivalent of climbing Mount Everest twice). Unfortunately, he didn't quite complete his challenge, but he has nevertheless raised more than his target. As a result, he has donated £600 to Neuro Central. We are extremely grateful for his support, all those who supported him on his epic journey, and all those who donated. Thank you so much.



INEOS Tour de France

This unique challenge organised by INEOS has teams of cyclists who, as a group, and for 21 days, have to ride the same distance travelled by the riders in the Tour de France.



Team 3 included Alan Wilson and three of his colleagues. They successfully completed the challenge and raised £1,000 for charity. They decided to split the money between four charities and Alan kindly nominated Neuro Central as the recipient of his £250.

We are very grateful to both Alan and INEOS for this generous donation.

Forth Valley Neuro-a-go-go Walk



The neurology team from Forth Valley Royal Hospital in Larbert held their sponsored walk up Dumyat on Saturday 25th June to raise funds for Neuro Central. It was a very blustery but sunny day when they got to the top of Dumyat which is

one of the hills in The Ochils above Stirling. The team has done similar walks in the past for Neuro Central and this one has raised £755 so far. This is a fantastic amount and we are extremely grateful for their support.



Future Fundraising Event

Pre-Mother's Day Afternoon Tea, for family & friends

Just a reminder for those who purchased tickets for our special Afternoon Tea which was to be held at the Aytoun Hall in Auchterarder on Saturday 21 March 2020. We plan to go ahead with this event in 2023 so please hold onto your tickets as they will still be valid.

Meetings

Our regular meet up sessions will restart in September. All the Zoom links can be found on our Facebook page and email, along with any information on supportive talks. Here is a reminder of our regular sessions:



Stirling -

First and Third Monday of the month 11am - 1:00pm

Auchterarder -

Second Wednesday of the month 6:30pm – 8:30pm

Fourth Saturday of the month 11:00am – 1:00pm

Scott's Relaxation Sessions via Zoom

This is a half hour of guided relaxation from the comfort of your own home. It takes place monthly on the second Tuesday of the month at 7:00 pm.

Physiotherapy

Katy will be doing weekly exercise classes via Zoom on a Thursday morning at 11am. You can also follow Katy online leading some exercises at youtu.be/r21-pG2X4oU

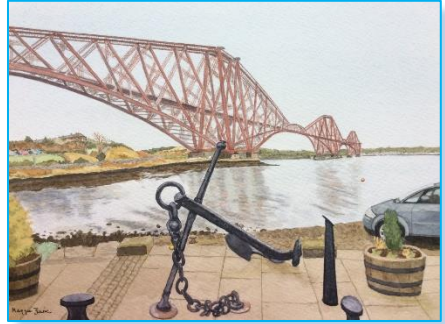
Mindfulness Sessions

We will continue our monthly top up sessions on the last Thursday of each month starting at 6:00pm organised by trained facilitator, Adrienne Hannah.



Neuro Central Gallery

The Neuro Central Gallery was created during lockdown to share some of the projects that Neuro Central members carried out to help them pass the time during lockdown isolation. As can be seen by these images, provided by Maggie, Scott, Heather, Trisha and Moira – we certainly have a talented group of members!



The Gallery is not yet complete and there is space for more pictures, so if you have worked on something that you would like to share, email sheila.doogan@neurocentral.org.uk and we will add it to the gallery.

The link to go to the Gallery is neurocentral.org.uk/gallery/#NCG01



Neuro Central Board of Trustees

We Need You



As a Scottish charity (SCIO) we have five trustees who oversee Neuro Central's activities. We are only able to do what we do through the help of many willing volunteers.

We are though only able to exist because of the trustees.

Four of them have been in post since we were formed in 2016 and it is time for a change. Without replacements, we will not be able to continue.

So, do you or someone you know care enough about Neuro Central to want to join us as a trustee?

If you do, or you would like more information, please contact our Secretary by email at secretary@neurocentral.org.uk.