



NEWSLETTER April 2024

❖ Welcome

We were **21 attendees** including 2 new members (welcome Julia and Linda!), 3 from the Respiratory team (thanks for taking the photos, John!) and our two candidate MP guests! With 8 apologies received due to illness or (mostly!) holidays, there was clearly a lot of interest! 😊

MAIN EVENT: The Next Government – What will they do for Lung Health?

We had very interesting presentations from both candidate MPs for Stoke Central.

Dr Chandra
Kanneganti CBE
(Conservative)



Gareth Snell
(Labour)



Each candidate spoke for about 30 minutes and acknowledged the very challenging situation that we face in Stoke and North Staffordshire. They both broadly agreed on all the key goals and outcomes for improved healthcare and environment but with very different approaches to get there!

Dr Chandra gave a lot of detail about positive actions that the ICB had started, or that were already planned to be done, to improve the diagnosis and treatment of lung conditions locally. He stated that he wanted to accelerate the deployment of these actions and that “improving health care was his main priority”. In essence, the message seemed to be “we’re getting there...”

Gareth’s presentation was a more personal approach on the realities experienced today. He emphasized the unfairness and lack of local NHS funding, the resulting crisis in the system and the appalling lack of accountability and of law enforcement, again due to lack of funding. A more inclusive approach with the medical and support staff on future planning was also a key success factor for the future in healthcare. The key message here seemed to be that “we have to do more, make people accountable and manage it better...”

Their detailed responses to the questions that we set them are attached.

Many thanks to both candidates. We will follow up on some particular points raised and for sure we look forward to the full deployment of all the promised actions (whoever wins the election!).

❖ **Radio Stoke broadcast**

Paula White broadcast a 5-minute article about Breathe Easy on the Lee Blakeman show, 22nd March. It's basically an interview with Victor and then with Joyce. I think it's good publicity for the group! It will be available on BBC Sounds until 21st April, (we are at 3 hours 42 minutes into the show).

Here's a recording of the article:
(thanks, Hamish!)


Paula White_HK.mp3



❖ **May Meeting – Spring Outing for Kingfisher Spotting!**



The Wolseley Centre Nature Reserve is a *Staffordshire Wildlife Trust* site alongside the river Trent and with large ponds and great facilities (including café). The site is very well laid out with flat accessible walkways for enjoyable short walks. There is a car park at the Centre (*free but donations are requested!*) At this time of year many different birds are nesting but the main attractions are the Kingfishers!

The Wolseley Centre postcode is **ST17 0WT** – it's on the A51 after the Wolseley Bridge, 11 miles (16 minutes) from the turn off onto the A51 from the A34 at Aston/Stone.

Next door is the Wolseley Bridge Garden Centre – which people might also want to visit whilst there.

Note: For the Nature Centre car park, turn right when you leave the roundabout and follow the path. This is different from the Garden Centre car park which is on the left/straight ahead off the roundabout.

Let's meet at the café at the Wolseley Centre for lunch at 12:30 pm (menu attached for info). We will aim to complete lunch and start to **explore the reserve from around 1:45 pm**. So please join us then if you prefer to eat elsewhere (for instance at the Garden Centre) or if you prefer to bring your own sandwiches.

If you've got binoculars, please don't forget to bring them!!
(And because it's England, please also bring a raincoat just in case! ☺)

❖ Volunteers Needed!

➤ **World Asthma Day – Awareness Event in Cannock, Wednesday 15th May (tbc)**

Our **Community Respiratory Team** are running an Asthma awareness and support event in Cannock together with our **South Staffordshire Breathe Easy** colleagues and they need our help! I've suggested that 3 or 4 of us could volunteer to help on the day, directing patients, chatting with them and generally helping to make the day go well. I'd be happy to give a lift to a couple of the volunteers but a second car would be good.

Please contact me if you are able to help! It's important to aid our fellow support groups!

➤ **Trentham Community Day for Emergency Services & Charities, Saturday 18th May**

This is a fantastic opportunity for Breathe Easy North Staffs to meet the public!! Trentham are expecting thousands to attend this event and we've been promised a gazebo right by the lake (next to the Perseus statue) to maximise footfall! We'll even be able to present ourselves on stage during the event so that nobody will miss us! I'm thinking we'd do a cake sale and tombola as well as have all our leaflets/booklets on self-management. But it's potentially a big day so we'll need lots of stuff!!

AND lots of volunteers! The good news is that entry is FREE if you help out on the stand. And you'll get to wear the famous Asthma & Lung T-Shirt ☺ I can put 8 or 10 people on the "free access" list – and we're going to need that many during the day! The event is planned to last the whole day.

So....

- ❖ **Please contact me and let me know during what times you could help on the day – we'll need people to work "in shifts" during the day.**
- ❖ **Please have a good search around and start collecting items that we can put in the Tombola. Also please let me know**

I'm excited – I think this could be a great event for us!

Next Get-Together: Friday 3rd May 2024 – 12:30 at Wolseley Centre

Contact: Victor CHOLIJ Tel: 07789 713782 or Hamish Kirkpatrick Tel: 07962 400182
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2024	Main Event	Other Topic(s)	Awareness Events
January	AGM		
February	PR & Exercise		
March	20th Anniversary Event		Blythe Bridge
April	Lung Health - Future Govt Policy?		Longton
May	WOLSELEY Centre Nature Reserve		World Asthma Day: Cannock Trentham Gardens
June	Diet		
July	Mental Wellbeing		Meir
August	Day Trip		
September			
October			
November			World COPD Day: Affinity Blythe Bridge
December	<i>Christmas Lunch</i>		



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