



NEWSLETTER March 2024

BENS 20th Anniversary

We celebrated the remarkable achievements of our Breathe Easy community group in wonderful style at Newcastle's The Carlton Club on 1st March. We were 36 members and guests enjoying the kind, and often moving, words from our two main speakers – Mike McKevitt, Asthma & Lung UK Director of Support Services and Vicky Campbell, MPFT Clinical Lead for Respiratory Services.

Published with this event is a souvenir booklet telling the story of our activities over these 20 years. It shows just how much the group has achieved – especially with our benchmark pioneering of close collaboration with our local NHS Community Respiratory Team.

We start our next 20 years' adventures by continuing to develop local partnerships, such as our "BENS X" Exercise class with the support of the Douggie Mac Wellbeing Centre and Keele University.

We are all real people living in, and working together with, our local community to live our best lives!





Potto Lotto

This month we also launched our inclusion in the local “Potto Lotto” game.

This is a lottery set up by the City of Stoke of Trent as a fun way to support local causes. Half the ticket income goes to the charity you choose (please choose Breathe Easy! 😊) with another 10% going to a pool of local causes. You then have a chance to get £25 000 richer!

OK it's a long shot, but fun on a Saturday night just in case...

Because it's aimed at helping our local community (not just us), I think we can promote this outside the group to all our friends and family and indeed wider to any other groups we might belong to. I've got lots of flyers that you can take to share. Attached are posters too that you could share (better quality than the ones last Friday – the QR codes should work this time!)

Remember, this is only meant to be for fun – don't spend any money you can't afford!

BENS April: The Next Government – What will they do for Lung Health?

I'm pleased to confirm that for our next meeting (5th April) we will have as guest speakers:

Gareth Snell - Labour Parliamentary candidate for Stoke Central, and

Dr Chandra Kanneganti CBE – Conservative Parliamentary candidate for Stoke Central

I've asked them to each present to us what they, and their Party, consider are the priorities for Lung Health and the way to achieve them. More specifically, I've asked:

1. Is the local NHS Integrated Care Board investing enough in better access to diagnostic testing and treatment for local people with lung conditions?
2. Does your Party propose
 - a. to fund the respiratory mission, promised by the current government, to increase research and innovation spending on diagnosis and treatment of lung conditions?
 - b. to fund the shift to cleaner forms of transport for local people?
3. How does your Party propose to “fix the NHS”?

*{NOTE: Before any of you complain that I'm not being fair to other Political Parties, there are not many candidates announced at this stage but I will be contacting a **Lib Dem** and **Green** candidate; so let's see.}*

This is a great opportunity to ask one of our prospective local MPs any relevant question that is important to you concerning our health and wellbeing. The best outcome would be if we could send them our questions in advance so that they could really look into what their Party's committing to on that topic.

➤ **So if you have any questions – please send them to me as soon as possible.**

Don't worry though, we'll all have a chance to ask and react on the day as well.

Next Get-Together: Friday 5th April 2024 – 1h30 at Tesco

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