

Headway Sefton News



October 2024

Welcome to October's Newsletter. Here are some of the headlines:

David Jenkins – 10 years on
Cathy Johnston Nomination
Treasurer Report

Funding News
Christmas Lunch
Editing; Twelve Months On



David Jenkins – 10 years on

David Jenkins – 10 years on.

What a journey the last 10 years have been.

David Jenkins was the first member of Headway Sefton when we set up our branch in October 2014.

As you all know, he had suffered a serious brain injury not long before, and so he agreed to come along and see what we could build that would help people like him.

I clearly recall our first drop in where a handful of people attended. David came along and it became apparent that, despite his injury, his competitive spirit was intact as he made sure he was the first to finish the word searches. So too

was his compassion, patience, and understanding of others. Despite his own issues, he always made time to talk to new members and share his experiences, offering what reassurance he could to members in those early, bewildering months and beyond. You don't get a second chance to make a first impression, and for many, David was their first impression of Headway Sefton, and we were stronger for it. They met someone who understood, had been in their shoes, and could help them navigate life post injury.

Those of you living with brain injury know how difficult the journey to recovery can be. David was a father to two young children, and a husband to his lovely wife

Louise, whose lives were also shattered. Trying to recover while dealing with his family responsibilities cannot have been easy.

David developed the concept of the KIT group to offer a weekly session for people to meet and find peer support outside of the formal monthly drop-ins. It is a place where new members could find their feet and learn more about Headway Sefton; a place where friendships are formed; a place to find an ear to bend or a shoulder to cry on.

His support of members extended beyond attending meetings to taking calls and texts, and meeting up to offer support to those in need. He was always willing to speak to new people, which was an invaluable service.

David's short-listing for the Headway UK National Awards gave recognition for his hard work. Although pipped at the post, he was and always will be a winner in our eyes for the positive impact he has had on the lives of many families who have walked through our doors here at Headway Sefton.



So why am I writing this article? Well, whilst his injuries excluded David from his original career path, he has proactively pursued courses and qualifications such that he can explore opportunities outside of Headway Sefton. He is seeking roles where he can use his skills, knowledge and experience to help other survivors of neurological injury, or those troubled by mental health issues.

While still involved in KIT, David will step back from being the figurehead, allowing others to pick up the reins. David has also resigned from the Committee whilst he pursues new ventures, but don't worry, he will still be part of the Headway Sefton family.

Thank you very much, David, for all you have done for all at Headway Sefton. We wish you every success in your new ventures and hope to see you as often as time allows.

We feel honoured to have been a part of your journey.

Carol and all your friends at Headway Sefton.

Committee Vacancy

Since David Jenkins has stepped down to pursue other opportunities, a vacancy has become available on the Headway Sefton Committee.

We invite members to express their interest in becoming the next valued member of the team.

Full details available on request.

If you are interested in becoming a committee member, please contact our branch secretary Carol Hopwood by email:

carol.hopwood@btinternet.com

CATHY JOHNSTON – by Carol Hopwood

Stephen McAleese Outstanding Contribution Award Nomination (abridged)

I met Cathy in 2013. She and her husband, Jan, were at a brain injury related talk. As we chatted, Jan succumbed to the challenges of fatigue. He had been very lucky to survive a broken spine and catastrophic brain injury. Cathy was struggling to adjust to the financial, practical, and emotional pressures of keeping their business afloat, being a mother to her boys, and supporting Jan.

Struck by her natural warmth and her absolute determination to do all that she could to help Jan be the best post-accident version of himself that he could be, I saw her as inspirational.

In 2014, my two-year quest to set up Headway Sefton was approved by Head office. I was concerned about the social isolation that brain injury survivors suffered and felt that with the right set of volunteers, we could make a real difference. I now needed to find a chairperson to work with me.

On the very same day that I was given approval, fate intervened; I bumped in to Cathy in a Tesco car park. I instantly knew that she would be a brilliant Chair. She had the lived experience, empathetic personality and warmth that made people instantly relax and open up.

What a ten-year journey it has been. We started with one or two people and have grown to a regular membership of about 40 people at our monthly drop in, as well as a weekly Keep in Touch group run by one of our brain injured volunteers.

Cathy goes way above and beyond for our members. She can often be found cooking meals, transporting them to appointments, speaking with social workers and fighting their battles with red tape. She has helped furnish flats, donated immeasurable items of clothing and generally been the “go-to person.” She has lent a listening ear to many in their darkest moments.



In 2019, Cathy found herself back at hospital with Jan, who had fallen 15 foot out of a tree. He had suffered another bleed on his brain, broken his back, all of his ribs, collapsed both lungs, broken a collarbone, damaged his teeth and eyes. Cathy and her boys were once again told to prepare themselves for the worst. Thankfully, he survived.

Despite this, or perhaps because of this, Cathy continues to evolve and develop in her role as our chair. Nothing phases her. She takes all problems and difficulties that in her stride. She never judges. She is highly emotionally intelligent and absolutely deserves recognition for the positive change that she has helped deliver to many of our members. She has been the change for good for many. She has undoubtedly saved the lives of those she has helped in their darkest times, and she does it all with a smile on her face and a mischievous twinkle in her eye. She is also a very funny person, with an infectious cackle of a laugh. Our branch is very lucky to have her.

Headway Sefton phone number: 07736774496

TREASURER'S REPORT – by Jan Johnston

As voluntary workers, we do not receive any payment for the work we do at Headway Sefton; this allows for every penny raised to go directly towards helping our members. A lot of behind-the-scenes work goes on; a big thank you to our active members.

We've seen some outstanding, once-in-a-lifetime fundraising efforts over the years that we've celebrated with you. The Ormeshers, friends of Michelle and Tommy, help organise regular events; some smaller donations add to the pot from cash instead of funeral flowers; and the odd gift is left as a clause in somebody's will. Every penny counts!

In the past, we had an in-house fund finder called Heather, who rooted out online grants and charity funding to help us. If you know somebody who could help us in this department, please let us know!

Every year brings challenges to find new ways to raise cash for our activities, and your ideas and efforts are invaluable. If you have any fundraising ideas, please let us know. We can help support or organise a campaign. Your involvement makes our fundraising a success.

Last 12 month's outgoings:

Venue hire + catering	£1,800
Panto & RHS Worsley	£1,500
Music, Art, Yoga	£500
Hanging Baskets - Free this year	£00
Christmas Dinner	£1,500
Towerwood	£9,000
TOTAL	£14,300

Headway Sefton's annual running costs stand at around £15,000.

As a Brain-Injured Person, I understand how much Headway Sefton has helped me, and continues to do so with every visit. Without the support of the members, I would be in real difficulty, and would not have recovered as much as I have so far.

Ways we can all help to raise funds with little effort include:

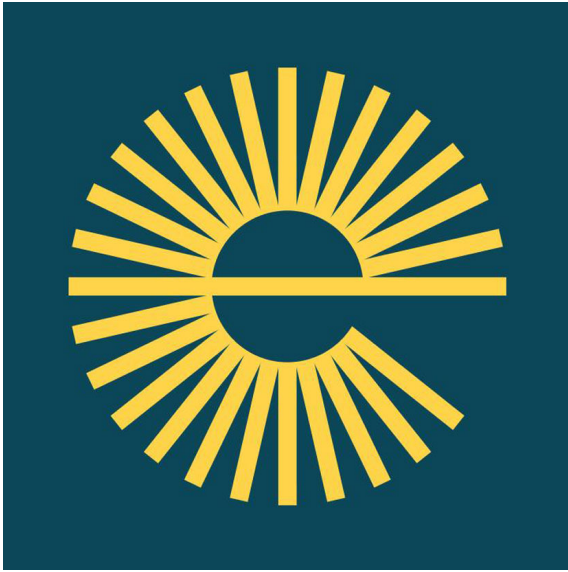
1. Use the Easyfundraising app. Last year, this raised between £600 and £1000 for us. It costs nothing and gives us a percentage of your spending. Most major retailers are subscribed, including Amazon and eBay. See a committee member to help you install it!
2. Small legacy gifts in a will.
3. Keep attending and encourage others to come to the meetings; the £1 contribution helps to offset the cost of monthly expenses.
4. Encourage family members to fundraise on our behalf. Examples include school events, coffee mornings, garden parties, and office bake-offs. We can help with advertising, etc. Every penny helps.
5. We will hold our 2025 tenth anniversary ball on Friday, June 6th, at the Liver buildings. Can you help sell a table?

I hope you've found this report helpful. Your past support has been invaluable; your future support is welcomed.

Together, we can make 2025 as successful as this year.

FUNDING

Easyfundraising App



As you all know, we are always looking at ways to raise funds for our branch. This covers the cost of the things like our Hall Hire, subsidised lunch at drop in, guest

speakers, hanging baskets, art and music therapies, subsidised Christmas lunch, etc.

We are super appreciative of the fundraising that is done for us, but there is a way we can all get involved to help sustain our branch, especially with Christmas coming up.

The Easyfundraising app can be downloaded to your phone, tablet or computer; every time you shop online, simply go through the app. The retailer makes a donation at no cost to you; so, it's a WIN-WIN! We are 100% volunteer led, so all funds raised go directly to the cost of running our branch. Thanks everyone.

<https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk>

Letter from Headway - Budget for Brain Injury

Dear Colleagues,

Ahead of the Budget on 30th October, Headway has relaunched our Budget for Brain Injury campaign.

You can see the details of the #BudgetForBrainInjury campaign here:

<https://t.ly/BHbsg>

The upcoming spending review has provided us with another opportunity to request that the government sets aside funding to support people with brain injuries.

We have written another open letter to the Chancellor, highlighting the lack of funding available for essential community-based rehabilitation and reablement

services for brain injury survivors across the UK.

We are asking brain injury survivors and their loved ones to write to their MPs using the template letter provided, encouraging them to champion the needs of survivors in their local areas. Please encourage your service users to use the letter and write to their local MP as soon as possible.

We would love you to highlight the campaign on your social media channels.

If you would like to chat about this, or anything else, please get in touch.

With best wishes,

Kirsty

Headway Sefton is sponsored by Carpenters Group

BRANCH NEWS

Annual Networking Event

On Tuesday 8th October after a 5am start, Carol and Cathy jumped on the train down to London for the Headway UK Annual Networking Event. This is an annual meeting attended by representatives from Groups and Branches all over the UK. It's an opportunity to meet and share ideas. Thankfully, Headway UK paid for our train tickets, so off we headed to "The Smoke".

We arrived looking like two drowned rats thanks to a downpour and had to scuttle our way into the meeting that had already started. Several guest speakers

covered issues such as recruitment of volunteers, strategy, branch objectives, growth, fundraising and more. Having also chatted with staff and volunteers from other branches, we came away enthused and with some good ideas for our branch moving forwards.

What struck us was we were one of the few branches that is 100% volunteer-led. We don't pay anyone, which means 100% of funds raised goes straight back into the branch. We are very grateful to be in such a position.

Christmas Lunch – 6th December

Details of this year's Christmas Meal are now confirmed.

Friday 6th December. 12-30pm start at "Inside Number 4" – 4a Carnegie Avenue, Crosby, L23 3BR

The Merchant Taylors 6th from Choir will also be in attendance in line with tradition.

Menu is included on the back page. If you wish to attend, please:

- a. To confirm attendance by letting Cath or Carol know at the meeting

OR

Message Cathy on 07736774496 or email: cathyjohnston22@gmail.com

- b. Confirm your menu choices

Although the meal is subsidised, there will be a charge of £10. Make sure to pay this in advance, and by November's drop-in at the latest.



Carpenters Group - Carol Hopwood 07866367886
Head of Serious and Catastrophic Injury

Editing; Twelve Months On – John Mc

This edition of headway Sefton's Newsletter marks the one-year anniversary of my editorial input. And what a year it has been. Twelve months and ten (ish) editions later and we are hosting the treasurer's report, saying a sort-of farewell to David Jenkins and nominating Cathy Johnston for a national award.

Headway Sefton's newsletter, I thought "What the hell? Why not?" So, I agreed with the proviso that I wouldn't be chasing people for content. Well, that was wishful thinking! Moaning aside, it has been an enjoyable, though sometimes stressful, experience.

To ease much of the stress, I first attempted to set deadlines. Of course, Douglass Adams had a wonderful view of deadlines. He said, "I love deadlines. I love the whooshing noise they make as they go by." He's not the only one. An article for the newsletter once arrived two days before had to be printed. I wonder where that went?

Part of my job has been to correct submission for grammar, spelling and

length. Oh, the power! Seriously, it's an enjoyable and satisfying task; a bit like the final polishing of the perfect car before it's displayed in the showroom.

So, in the past year, I have edited and laid out stories from members' brain injury experiences, reports on nominees, charity fundraisers, Branch outings, and activities. We've included guidance on benefits and other help that's out there, and signposted entertainment events.

And, of course, Frank Horan's tall tales, which were originally told to his grandchildren.

Send us articles our members may be interested in, let us know about events we may want to attend, or just write an entertaining story. If you're not so good at writing, Cathy has volunteered to transcribe an audio file for you if you would like to tell your story that way.

So, keep the good stuff coming. Send all items to hwnews@johnmc.co.uk at least ten days before the monthly meeting. I look forward to buffing it up for you.



NOVEMBER BIRTHDAYS

1ST – Wayne

21st David Jenkins

NOVEMBER DEADLINE

Deadline for November articles

17th NOVEMBER



INSIDE NO4

Christmas Lunch

Monday - Friday 12- 4pm
2 course £20
3 course £24

STARTERS

Roast Parsnip & Butterbean Soup (VG, GF)

A velvety blend of roasted parsnips and butter beans, topped with crunchy croutons and crispy onions

Chicken Parfait (GF)

Smooth and creamy chicken parfait served with a red onion chutney and crispy focaccia crisps

*Traditional roast turkey
with all the festive trimmings.*

Garlic mushrooms (GFOA, VG)

served on sourdough with garlic cream & shaved Italian cheese

MAINS

Traditional Turkey (GF)

With all the festive trimmings

Salmon steaks with cheese.

Haddock Fillet (GF)

Pan-seared haddock fillet served with garlic mussels in a creamy sauce with parsley mash

Traditional Nut Roast (VG)

With all the festive trimmings

DESSERTS

Xmas pudding with brandy sauce (GF, VGOA)

Vanilla cheesecake with mulled wine compote

Festive Eaton Mess

with seasonal berries whipped cream and crispy meringue

GFOA - Gluten Free Options Available . GF- Gluten Free.

V - Vegetarian. VG - Vegan

