

Mid Sussex Prostate Cancer Support Group

Newsletter

September 2021



Good morning everyone

I am sad to advise you that Thomas Knowles passed away this weekend, from a non-prostate cancer illness. I first met Thomas during lockdown on one of our early chat rooms in March. Despite being over 90 and hard of hearing he persevered with Zoom, and became a regular member in the chat room. On learning that he had a farm, it gave me the idea that perhaps some of our group could meet up for short walks in a safe environment. Karen and I were soon welcomed by Ann and Thomas one sunny afternoon on his terrace, and Burstye Bumpers was born. Thomas was an inspiration to those who met him, and I will miss his chats both in person and on Whats App. We send our condolences to Ann and their family.

On a happier note, I hope you have had a great summer, seen family and friends, and perhaps been on holiday. Karen and I have been lucky enough to achieve all three.

This time last year I took over the role of Chairman with two main aims: Firstly, to ensure that our members received good support from our Support Group and, secondly, to make the wider Mid Sussex population aware of our group's existence and prostate cancer generally. I am happy that we are achieving these aims, and you will all have seen our progress from monthly newsletters, our excellent website, and articles in local publications.

Whilst on holiday I received calls on our dedicated mobile number. Unfortunately, one of the men I spoke to, who had no symptoms, had been diagnosed with advanced PC, which was devastating news, but he is glad to have the telephone support of our group. This reminds me of previous newsletters, when I have been stressing the importance of talking to friends and family to encourage getting a PSA test done to catch the cancer early before it spreads.

In July I was approached by the Surrey and Sussex Cancer Alliance to take part in a short video entitled 'The Big C Conversation - Prostate Cancer'. Once again, this is promoting the importance of getting tested early. A copy of the little film is available by following this link: <https://youtu.be/ehUVo7RTPU8> Please help to spread the word about getting an early PSA test with your friends and family.

Last weekend I attended Burgess Hill Health Awareness Day and was invited to join the Central Sussex Rotary on their stand. A gazebo was set up, together with a static bike, with the intention of pedalling a distance of 100km and raising money for PCUK. I am pleased to say that 100km was achieved, and a good sum of money raised. The local mayor opened the event and made references to prostate cancer and our group, which was most encouraging.



I attended the Zoom AGM of PCaSO as a member. (It was due solely to PCaSO that my own prostate cancer was found). Unfortunately, no PSA testing days have been held due to Covid, which means that, unlike the previous year when over 6000 men were tested, with over 400 at-risk cases being found, many men are walking around unaware of their potential health problem, as evidenced by the mobile call I had whilst on holiday.

A Zoom presentation was then given by Professor Chris Eden, a specialist surgeon, who described a robotic technique called Retzius Sparing surgery, and this method of radical prostatectomy is proving to have less side effects than other methods. A copy of the excellent presentation can be viewed on our website. Don't give up on this technical presentation, it could be very helpful for those who are on active surveillance and who may have to make a decision on their treatment path in the future. The Q&A session explains more.

For those that haven't yet joined Rob on his strolls in our wonderful Sussex countryside, maybe you would like to start thinking of doing so now. Not only is walking good for your physical health, but the mental satisfaction is immeasurable. This time of year is perfect to see the changing landscape from summer to autumn, and the colours are amazing. I can tell you from experience that 'It is good to talk' and share experiences with your fellow members. Just get in touch with Rob to find out more.

I am pleased to say that our weekly Zoom chat room will restart on Friday 24th September at 16.30. We had over 20 different members join in, at different times, before our summer recess, so just join in for a good chat and catch up. Sign in details will follow.

We on the committee are all looking forward to seeing you face to face at our next meeting on 14th October. Have a good month.

Brian Holden, Val Banfield, Rob Stanley and Jenny Lea

