**Macular Society Newsletter for North Wales**

Macular Society Regional Newsletter Update from Marian Williams (Regional Manager North Wales) March 2022.

Exciting news, all of the North Wales Groups are now scheduled to return to face to face in March and April.

**MACULAR SOCIETY GROUPS UPDATE IN MARCH**

* **Llandudno Support Group** – 1 Monday of every month at 11am. Venue: Cae Mor Hotel, Llandudno, Conwy
* **Abergele Support Group** – 3 Monday of every month at 1.30pm Venue: Hafod y Park, Abergele, Conwy
* **Pwllheli Support Group** – 1 Friday of every month at 1pm. Venue: Presbyterian Church, Ala Road, Pwllheli, Gwynedd
* **Llangollen Support Group** – 4 Monday of every month at 11am. Venue: The Hand Hotel, Llangollen
* **Aberystwyth Support Group** – 4 Wednesday of every month at 11am Venue: Café Athro, Aberystwyth
* **Welshpool Support Group** – 2 and 4 Tuesday of every month at 2pm. Venue: Methodist Church, Welshpool.

**MACULAR SOCIETY GROUPS UPDATE IN APRIL**

* **Newtown Support Group** – 1 Monday of every month at 2pm – first meeting in April. Venue – MCRA, Plas Dolerw, Milford Road, Newtown.
* **Dolgellau Support Group** – 3 Wednesday of every month at 1.30pm – first meeting in April. Venue: Theatr Fach Dolgellau, Gwynedd
* **Blaenau Ffestiniog Group** – 2 Friday of every month at 1pm. Venue: Antur Stiniog Café, Blaenau Ffestiniog, Gwynedd
* **Holyhead Support Group** – 3 Tuesday of every month at 10.30am. Venue: Millbank Community Centre, Holyhead, Anglesey.
* **Bangor Town** – 2 Monday of every month at 1pm. Venue: Quakers, Dean Street, Bangor, Gwynedd.

**ALL WALES MACULAR SOCEITY GROUP CALLS**

As majority of groups in Wales are resuming face-to-face meetings, we have set up four weekly All Wales telephone calls to help those who are unable to make it to meetings in person.

These will take place from March onwards 2022:

First Wednesday at 11am – English

Second Wednesday at 2pm – Welsh Only

Third Wednesday at 2pm – English

Fourth Wednesday at 11am – English

These will be hosted by, Adele Francis (South Wales) and Marian Williams (North Wales). Please contact me on 07495 054053 for more details.

**CONNECT BY TECH.**

Do you have some technology that you are finding frustrating, are you struggling to see or it could just be driving you bananas. Phones, tablets, computers and smart speakers are all great and reasonably accessible but there might be something you need some advice about so you can make better use of the device. If this is the case, why not give the Macular Society Connect by Tech Service a call. One of our fabulous volunteers will give you a call and talk you through the problem over the telephone. You can contact the Connect by Tech service through the Advice & Information Service on 0300 3030 111 or by emailing Techtalk@macularsociety.org

**RESEARCH UPDATE**

Research to understand how we reach more people. We need to understand more about those people who we are not yet reaching and who we can help. To find out who they are, where they are and what they want, we have commissioned a company called Yellow Insights to carry out some research with patients and caregivers. Although we are looking for people who don’t know us, you might hear about the research through your networks so if this does create any questions, please get in touch with Karen Searle on 01264 326 626 or Emma Malcolm on 01264 321 970. This is such an important piece of work, and we are looking forward to seeing the results later in the year.

Revolutionary bionic chip inserted in first UK patient with AMD

A patient with dry age-related macular degeneration (AMD) has been able to detect signals in her blind left eye thanks to a revolutionary new implant. An 88-year-old has become the first UK patient to receive a new device which gives hope of partially restoring vision to people with dry AMD. You can read the full article on the Macular Society website at www.macularsociety.org.

**VI TALK**

VI Talk is a charity supporting blind and partially sighted people, their families and friends. We have nine Facebook groups including our main group for sharing ideas, information and support. Resources for sale items and events relevant to people with visual impairment. Other groups include book club, arts and crafts, in the kitchen, gardening and nature, music, travel and sport. We hold Zoom chats on Monday and Wednesday evenings for friendship and peer support. We have crochet classes over Zoom as well. Our accessible web site has a directory of services relevant to blind and partially sighted people. You can sign up to our monthly newsletter and our Zoom chat mailing list by emailing info@vitalk.co.uk. We interview blind and partially sighted people who have a story to share and also professionals. You can listen through Audio Boom, Spotify, Amazon smart speakers and British Wireless for The Blind radios. We’re also on other social media platforms and can be contacted by phone on 07512 772 770.

If you would like further information about any of the topics raised in the newsletter, please contact me on 07495 054 053 or you can ring the Advice and Information number on 0300 3030 111.