

Autumn 2021/Winter 2022

dyscover
specialist aphasia support

NEWSLETTER

Keeping you up to date with News and Events



Dyscover is back in person *and* online

When Covid restrictions relaxed in September, we were delighted to be able to resume some meetings at Leatherhead and Kingston.

During the autumn term we reopened **two regular weekly groups at Leatherhead and one at Kingston**. Everyone recognised and appreciated the richness and spontaneity of 'real life' conversations in these groups. It has been good to watch friendships which started between members online, develop and grow.



Five groups continued to meet on Zoom. Our members have surprised and impressed us with their mastery of technology, and they have rarely missed a meeting.

Benefits of Zoom

In April 2020, we started '**Dyscover at Home**', online. Since then, our staff and volunteers have run an incredible **458 groups on Zoom**. 95 people with aphasia have taken part.

Reaching more people

Zoom can help us to reach people with aphasia who **live further away**, or who can't travel easily. It can also help with organising courses and events. Zoom makes it easy and convenient to **bring together people who have similar needs and wants**, but don't live in the same area. Next year, we plan to start work on **developing our online service further**.



"This autumn we have had a valuable opportunity to test out **a new version of Dyscover**," said Rosemary. It offers a **combination of in person and online support**."

Robin Tavistock Award

Our founder **Gill Jackson** received the prestigious **international Robin Tavistock Award** last year. It was presented at the AGM and Nicole Campbell of the Tavistock Trust for Aphasia described Dyscover as 'a **beacon of excellence in the aphasia world**, which puts the person with aphasia at the heart of everything it does'. She praised **Gill as an exceptional leader**, who does everything with enthusiasm, sensitivity and generosity. Gill received an engraved silver plate. On behalf of Dyscover, Rosemary accepted a **wall plaque to be displayed in our offices**.



To find out more about Dyscover

Please go to www.dyscover.org.uk or contact us for details of our online visitor sessions on Zoom, or to receive our regular newsletters.

Follow us on social media

 To find our page on Facebook search for Dyscover non-profit organisation.

 @dyscoveraphasia

 @DyscoverAphasia



Update from the Trustees

The Trustees have been focusing in the last few months on **increasing fundraising efforts towards our expansion strategy**. This entails both a **new website and the renewal and updating of our IT systems**. Alice has raised two grants totalling £10,000 towards this.



Michael Bensley, our IT specialist and Trustee, kept us going single-handedly on old equipment for many years. When he retired, it was **essential to renew our computers** and software and move to a cloud-based system.

In December we took delivery of **seven new desktop computers and four new laptops**, running Microsoft 365 software. Karen our new Office Manager, with Mike McCartney and myself put together a project to change over our systems in the run-up to Christmas.

Details of our new Trustees are on the opposite page. We now **have a solid team to take us forward** with our plans and I would like to thank Trustees old and new for the time they give to Dyscover.

With all the disruption of the last year it is amazing that we are in such good shape and good spirits. **We are indebted to our staff and volunteers** who have worked tirelessly in ever changing scenarios of lockdown and Covid restrictions.

My best wishes to you all for 2022.

John Woollatt, Chairman



Spotlight on Trustee **Wendela Elsen**

Wendela has been serving as a Trustee for three years. She was **born in the Netherlands** but left her country in 1997 and lived and worked in Taiwan and Japan where her son and twin girls were born. Wendela **moved to the UK in 2012 and her children are all at university here**.

Her professional background is in **human resources management** in the financial sector and in professional services. She now works as a life coach and focusses on women who had to give up their jobs to follow their husbands on assignment overseas. "I help them get back into some kind of professional activity", says Wendela, "be it paid work or volunteering."

It was **playing Bridge that introduced Wendela to Dyscover**. "Gill Jackson and I met on a course about four years ago and we have been playing together ever since. When I asked Gill if there was anything I could do for Dyscover, she suggested a Trustee position."

As a Trustee Wendela is mainly **involved in strategy development** and human resource related matters. She is also a member of the management committee.

What does Wendela most enjoy about volunteering at Dyscover? "It is such a friendly environment in every area; members, volunteers, staff and board of Trustees. **I find it very rewarding to be part of an organisation that makes such a difference to many of its members and their relatives.**"

Around Dyscover

Long service awards

We usually present long service awards to our volunteers at the Christmas lunch. This year we **celebrated within our groups** - and on a doorstep.

Diane (top photo) has notched up an amazing 25 years, while Christine has been with us for 15 years. Other volunteers to receive certificates were Anne, Edda, Elizabeth and former member Suzie. Their grand **total of service to Dyscover is 56 years.**

Suzie (right) has volunteered in the Wednesday group for three years. **Other members are acting as Aphasia Ambassadors** and helping with research. **More details on page 6.**



Funding update from Alice

Director of Business Alice, writes: Thanks to the top-up of funds gained from our Marathon runners' efforts in October, we are now **able to renew our IT equipment** and migrate over to Microsoft 365.

Karen, our new Office Manager, Chairman John and new trustee Mike, have been doing a lot of background work with local company TecRes to **ensure we get what we need and at the right price!** We look forward to starting our new term with improved technology.

I am still **working to secure sufficient funding for our day-to-day, core services**, but we received wonderful news about support for a future project. We have been pledged a large **£20,000 grant from the Tavistock Trust for Aphasia** towards the development of an expanded service. When we reach our funding target, the development phase will allow us to employ a project leader to develop our online aphasia services to another level.

Thank you

MICHAEL BENSLEY has been involved with Dyscover for **nearly 20 years**. We first met him when he brought his late wife, Gina, to the group at Walton. We found that he had amazing IT knowledge and a great willingness to help. He has **seen us through a number of upgrades, reboots and emergencies** and has spent many evening and weekend hours supporting our IT system at a moment's notice. In addition he has been a loyal Trustee acting for much of the time as a **very efficient Company Secretary.**



Welcome

NEW TRUSTEES

ACHIM VOGT (left in the photo) has worked in the financial sector in several different countries. He also has extensive **experience in local and international charities.**

MIKE McCARTNEY has a **background in IT management.** After a stroke in 2020 he joined Dyscover groups for a short while. We persuaded him to consider a role as Trustee, and he is now playing a **key role in helping coordinate our IT upgrade.**

SIMONE PAGE is married to Dyscover member Nick. She has a marketing background, and we are looking forward to her help in promoting Dyscover, as well as **providing a relative's perspective.**

OFFICE MANAGER

KAREN BOULT worked as an administrator at Dyscover over 10 years ago. Since then she has set up her own training business. Karen specialises in **HR management and systems administration.**



Groups in action

Dyscover out and about

Conversations in a noisy public space, like a café, can pose extra challenges. With the expert help of Rhona, our SLT at Kingston, a small group of Dyscover members are engaged in a series of **trial sessions at the Waterstones café** in Kingston's Bentall Centre. Rhona is helping staff understand aphasia and our members' needs. With smaller tables, a quieter corner of the café, and pen and paper to support conversations, **members are enjoying the meetings and growing in confidence.** Waterstones staff have given us a warm

welcome; the extra cookies were especially appreciated!



“My scooter is my freedom,” says John. He has not been able to return to driving after his stroke, but his scooter enables him to travel to his weekly group, and to the café sessions. On arrival, the scooter folds flat for easy storage – John enjoyed demonstrating its functions to other members.

The oldest thing

Topics close to members' hearts lead to some of the best conversations.

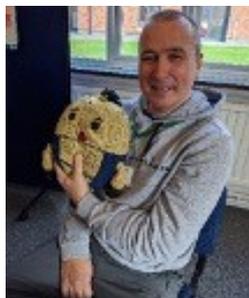
This was certainly the case when the subject was **‘The oldest thing in your home’**.

Members across **face to face and Zoom groups** shared a wide variety of old objects and memories.

Among them a barometer, wedding rings and an old phone.

Paul brought along his **hand-knitted Humpty Dumpty** and Heather showed a picture of Peter Pan given to her when she was seven years old.

Volunteer Patsy shared a ration book from when she was a child. This prompted reminiscences of **post-war food like dried eggs!**



Zoom skills

Zoom requires special communication **skills to share views and opinions.**

The topic ‘Women in our lives and in the world’ soon had everyone in the Thursday Zoom group involved.

They **gave their reactions amazingly well** through emotional responses to many famous women suggested. Paolo summed up his **thoughts on Hillary Clinton by saying ‘Get out of my pub’** - and backing it up with the written words!



Dinner guest

Which celebrity would you **invite to a dinner party?**

Carol was stuck for a name when she tried to tell Kingston members about her choice. But **she persevered with writing and drawing** and her friends recognised **Billy Connolly.**



Groups in action

What helps you?

Lively and wide-ranging discussions among Thursday members were prompted by the theme 'Who and what helps you? - both with practical things and emotional support.

Mick, Tim and Nick demonstrated the importance of **strategies such as drawing and using communication books**. Members were able to share views on subjects ranging from the best mobility scooters to useful apps, technology and audio books.

Discussions like this help members to **build their resources and resilience**, and prepare them to manage the ups and downs of life.

Communication book



Phone or tablet



Pencil and paper



Speech therapy apps



Talking money

Money proved a very popular topic. From highbrow discussions on art collections to **buy-one-get-one-free offers** on spectacles!

Kingston members reminisced about first jobs, pocket money, saving up tokens and how much they bought their first house for. They brought in **money from India, Malaysia, Slovakia and the Czech Republic**, all with interesting stories.



Boys' day out!

Volunteers Jim and Barry organised a **trip to The Oval for both Nicks** from our

Thursday group. They watched the **second day of a four-day match** between Surrey and Essex. Nick P said it was a long time since he had enjoyed a boys' day out.



Spotlight on Delarey Terblanche



Tuesday morning member Delarey **hails from South Africa**, but has lived in England for many years and it was here that he **met his Polish wife Violetta**.

Sport always played a very important part in Delarey's life. His main love was cricket but he also enjoyed rugby and **was a professional sportsman before turning to teaching** and becoming a Director of PE. During a rugby match in October 2019 he **suffered a bang on the head which was followed by a blood clot** and stroke. He was just 40. During his time in intensive care his wife was warned that he might never walk or talk again.

Delarey was in hospital during the Covid crisis but was discharged as soon as possible and **came home in a wheelchair**. Violetta is a

trained physical therapist and was able to treat her husband under the guidance of hospital staff. After such a massive stroke, **Delarey has made huge strides**. He goes regularly to the gym and speech therapy. He gets around to his appointments by taxi.

Delarey found out about Dyscover when Twickenham-based charity INS asked us to help their members with aphasia. Many members of **this group joined Dyscover for the autumn term. They meet via Zoom** and are given a topic to prepare beforehand. Delarey finds this a **stimulating challenge**. It gives him confidence to try and express himself.

He and Violetta would like to find a **group with younger people** and are considering starting something at their home.

Good friends are keeping in touch and Delarey still goes to the rugby club. **He and Violetta hope to visit Greece this summer**.

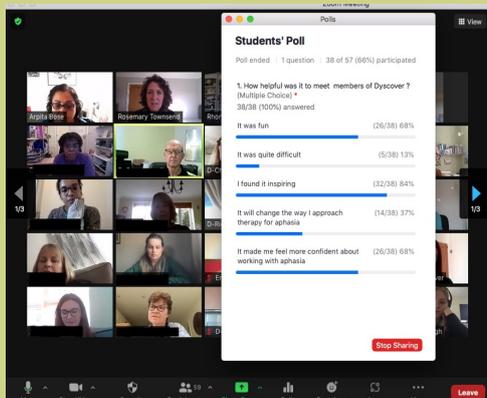
Have you Heard

Experts by experience

Twenty-three members have now taken on the role of **Aphasia Ambassadors**. Whether their aphasia is mild or more severe, everyone agrees the role is satisfying and **has helped them gain confidence**.

Visitors and participants in our training sessions benefit enormously from being able to listen to Ambassadors, **discuss what it's really like to have aphasia**, and ask questions.

Reading University staff and students were enthusiastic about the online workshop we ran in 2020, so asked us back last autumn. Rosemary taught 45 students about **our approach to aphasia support** before introducing them to **17 Ambassadors** in small breakout rooms. Rhona finished the workshop with a question and answer session. We hope to **offer this workshop to other universities**.



Reading Students gave very positive responses to our poll after the course.

How good is Zoom?

Soon after we set up 'Dyscover at Home', we found that **conversations in a Zoom group need to be managed differently**.

Structure and leadership of the conversation is needed to **allow turn taking**, and visual cues and props must be visible on screen.

We jumped at the opportunity to work with **researchers at Kings College and City Universities** to investigate the use of Zoom to run communication groups. 46 members, volunteers and staff agreed to have their **Zoom group conversations recorded and analysed**.

The study identified barriers that made online conversation difficult, but acknowledged that **with skilled support, they can still be inclusive**, enjoyable and beneficial for people with all types of aphasia.

Challenge programme

Autumn term saw a welcome **return to swimming and golf**, while Pilates continued as a popular Zoom activity.



PPA network

There was huge interest in a **new online network** for Speech and Language Therapists working with **Primary Progressive Aphasia (PPA)**. Rosemary is one of three SLTs who started this network.

Over **50 people joined** the inaugural meeting in September to share knowledge and support one another. We hope more people will join the next meeting in March.



In spring we plan more swimming and a return to **shooting with Bookham Rifle Club**.

Fundraising

Three marathon runners

Congratulations to our runners **Jo Curtis and Mandy Nickerson** who completed the London Marathon in October and to **Carol Reed** who ran the Virtual London Marathon to raise funds for us. This was Mandy's second time running the London Marathon for Dyscover and Jo's first 'real life' marathon after running the Virtual Marathon for us last year. Between them they raised the **splendid combined total of £4,575!**



Christmas in Nork

Our team of volunteers had a fun night helping **Banstead Rotary** with their Christmas collections around Nork. It was a cold evening but luckily stayed dry and they were **very well supported** with lots of people coming out to see Santa and make a donation. We received £423.



Quiz and curry

Over **50 people** enjoyed **wonderful food and company** at the Ashtead Balti. **Simon Edmunds** was the **perfect quiz host** with lots of interesting, challenging and thought-provoking questions. A raffle raised over £300 and the **evening's total was more than £800.**



Flamingo Cards

Our **thanks to Sarah Stanley** for again supporting us through the sale of her popular Flamingo Paperie products - both Christmas and everyday items. **She raised £100.**

Golf day

Tyrrells Wood Golf Club Captain, Chris, chose Dyscover last year as his Charity of the Year, but circumstances prevented him hosting his Golf Day, so we were thrilled when it was **re-scheduled for September!** A huge thank you to Tyrrells Wood, our Chairman John and Dyscover volunteers Gill, Barry, Bruce, Suzie and Maggie who helped make the day a success. **The Club has donated over £8,000.**

Our Chairman John and his team.



Mole Valley Lottery

Please do support Dyscover and buy tickets in the Mole Valley Lottery to **help raise funds for Dyscover** and also for our local community. Weekly cash prizes up to £25,000 and tickets are just £1.

<https://www.molevalleylottery.co.uk/support/dyscover>

Ride London '22 - 29th May

We have **four places for RideLondon-Essex 100** to fundraise for Dyscover! It offers a unique opportunity to cycle 100 miles on traffic-free roads through the heart of London and neighbouring Essex. **For details contact our Community Fundraising Coordinator Liz.** lgrace@dyscover.org.uk

Round Up

End of term

We were sorry to have to cancel our much anticipated Christmas lunch again this year. Instead we introduced a festive flavour to the final sessions of term.

Groups held smaller celebrations and members enjoyed a themed quiz dressed in their Christmas jumpers.



Hamper raffle

Our Christmas hamper raffle had to be held online this year, but we were delighted with the huge response, as ticket sales totalled £760.

Our grateful thanks to the team of **volunteers who packed the hampers** and made them look so attractive.



Winners came to our Leatherhead office to collect their prizes.



Christmas Top Draw

Top Draw organiser Nick visited the Wednesday group at Leatherhead on the final day of term. We were delighted when the **top prize of £200 went to Mike** one of the group members.



Our thanks to Nick for ensuring that the draws have continued throughout the year.

Annual shares in the club cost just £10 and there are five draws during the year. **Half of the cost of each share goes to Dyscover, with the rest distributed as prizes.**

Full details are on our website:
www.dyscover.org.uk

CONTACT US

www.dyscover.org.uk



Dyscover Limited, Leatherhead Court, Woodlands Road, Leatherhead, Surrey KT22 0BN
Tel: 01737 819419 Email: info@dyscover.org.uk

Registered Office: As above | Company No: 4814618 | Registered Charity No: 1099432

