

Spring 2023

NEWSLETTER

Keeping you up to date with News and Events



Celebrate 30 years with us!

We celebrated Dyscover's 29th birthday with a cake on 24 April and launched a 12-month calendar of events to mark our milestone 30th anniversary.

Every month, in the build-up, we will be suggesting a fundraising activity that you can take part in or hosting an event that you can attend.

We are **asking people to "Raise 30"**. There will be lots of suggestions about how you can do this or perhaps you could share our fundraising page to encourage family and friends to make a donation: [30th Anniversary Appeal - JustGiving](#)



A year of fundraising and celebrations will then culminate in a Grand Ball at Kingswood Golf Club on Saturday 27th April 2024.

Online support

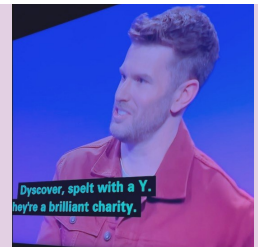
Our research project into the need for online services has shown a huge demand for long-term help and support.

We want to capitalise on the momentum we have generated and in the Summer term, we will **launch our first new online group**. Our longer-term goal is to build up a pathway of online support, including a range of new courses and groups, so that we can offer SLT-led differentiated support to people with aphasia and their families at every stage of their journey.

We have been building connections with digital inclusion organisations to enable us to **help people who need IT equipment or support to get online**.



Thanks,
Joel



We were thrilled when **TV personality Joel Dommett** chose **Dyscover** as his **charity** when he appeared on Celebrity Catchphrase. As well as raising funds for us, he also generated valuable publicity. More details on page 7.

Fast news



To mark Aphasia Awareness month in June, we shall be sharing a series of short posts on our Instagram account. **Please follow us** on Instagram.

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
- @dyscoveraphasiacharity7982

Update from the Trustees

What an exciting time to be part of the Dyscover family. Our latest Newsletter is bursting with positive stories.

I saw, for myself, the impact of Joel Dommett's choice of Dyscover when he appeared on Celebrity Catchphrase. I was at a meeting in the office a few days after the broadcast and Karen was dealing with several **phone calls from people who had seen the show.**



The Primary Progressive Aphasia project run by Rosemary Townsend is receiving many referrals. Again, the publicity regarding the actor, Bruce Willis, has raised awareness of PPA.

As reported on the front page, our research project into the need for online services has shown a huge demand for long-term help and support. **The Trustees are keen to expand Dyscover's online activities,** while remaining committed to face to face groups in our existing locations.

At our last Trustees' meeting we **welcomed two new members Roger Young and John Flower.** Roger has experience in finance and will help with grant applications. John's medical background will be invaluable to service delivery.

The Trustees are **grateful to the outstanding team at Dyscover.** People are flexible in their ways of working to meet the ever-changing needs of our members and keep smiling in the most challenging times.

Rosa Dennis



Spotlight on Specialist Speech and Language Therapist Maggie Stapleton

Maggie had a 'lightbulb moment' when she was considering starting on her third career. She realised that her previous skills and experience would be ideally suited to speech and language therapy.

She began her working life as a teacher of modern languages followed by a very **enjoyable ten years in the BBC's international PR unit.** Then came a break when her son and daughter were born. Both are now in their twenties. Charlotte is a teacher and Adam works in aerospace.

After completing her SLT studies at City University, Maggie **spent ten years with the NHS,** in a range of different settings, including inpatient and community services. She remembers cycling around London to reach her clients, who included some Chelsea Pensioners. She then worked independently and for a private neuro-rehabilitation company.

One thing Maggie particularly missed at this time was working as part of a team and she joined Dyscover in May 2022. Here **she runs three of our in-person groups at Leatherhead.** She particularly likes getting to know group members and seeing them support each other.

Maggie also delivers **training to our volunteers,** sharing her experience of supporting people with aphasia in a group setting. Training is ongoing and she responds to needs identified by the volunteers.

Around Dyscover

Funding update from Alice

Director of Business, Alice Owen, writes:

Following my concentrated effort on raising 'unrestricted funds' this last term, I am pleased to report that we **received large grants from repeat funders** Garfield Weston Foundation and Pierrepont Trust. We have also had a number of other successes with grant funding and have secured funding for our family support and some new online foundation groups.

Our six-month development project has now ended. Our in-house team have been remarkable and **achieved all the objectives set**, within an extremely short timeframe. The outcomes show us there are gaps in aphasia support across the UK and there is need for SLT-led online groups. Whilst we formulate our plan for an expansion of these services and apply for further funding, we are going to start to introduce some **new online groups** in response to the referrals we have already received as a result of this work



Volunteers

The Wednesday afternoon group said goodbye to psychology students Liberty and Heather, who while on placement at QEF, were **volunteers in the group last term**.

Heather said that she really looked forward to helping as she could 'see the benefits that attending the group has on our members quality of life and confidence'.

Liberty has enjoyed building therapeutic relationships with the members and learning supported conversation techniques. She hopes to train as an SLT.



Family support

We ran family support sessions over the Spring term for each group that meets face to face and we sent out a survey to ask relatives for their feedback regarding online family support sessions. Thank you to the 17 people who responded to the survey.

The results helped us understand more about the appetite for sessions. Responders told us that whilst meeting online might not be as good as face to face, it can be a convenient and useful way to meet other relatives and get support.

The survey also helped us focus on what you would like us to offer. Therefore, we will be offering a session focusing on *Aphasia and Strategies to Support Your Relative* on 29th June, everyone is welcome.

Thank you, Rhona

Lead SLT, Rhona has been doing a marvellous job temporarily leading our core services at Dyscover. In fact, in line with recent developments at Dyscover, she has carved out a nice new role for a Service Manager who will work alongside our Director of Business, Alice and our Principal SLT Rosemary, who now runs our PPA services separately. **Rhona will kindly continue to cover this role**, which we hope to appoint to this term, ready for a new Service Manager to join us in the Autumn.

ULEZ- are you affected?

In the Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ) a daily charge is made to certain vehicle owners if their vehicle has high emissions. On 29th August (albeit hotly contested) the ULEZ zone is expanding across **all London boroughs**. This will affect our Kingston Groups and some people attending our Leatherhead groups, as the boundary is literally yards away. If you drive a petrol car registered before 2005 or a diesel car registered before 2015, **check if it meets the ULEZ standards**.

Groups in action

Jenni can mix and match

Jenni has been a Leatherhead group member for over four years but in January returned to Zoom for a short while as she had temporarily lost her driver.

Speech Therapy Assistant Suzanne said “it’s great to have the flexibility of Zoom which enables ongoing support to our members when their circumstances change. Jenni has been a wonderful addition to the regular Tuesday Zoom and everyone has benefitted from a new dynamic in the group.”

Jenni agreed “While I was looking for a new PA, I was not able to get to Leatherhead so I joined Zoom. This gave me a chance to meet new people and practise my speech. It also gave me the chance to hear some super stories about the other people’s travel and life experiences.”



Non-verbal skills

Thursday morning members demonstrated a wide range of communication skills when they played an activity similar to charades.



They had to describe an animal to other group members, **using gesture, sound, drawing and other aids**. Several members showed their drawing skills. Dick’s fantastic gestures and mimicking of a donkey braying had

everyone in stitches.



Brian (top photo) used an alphabet sheet – to give the name.

A milestone for Sarah

Peer support is a crucial part of the progress members make in their long-term recovery. Many

of our Wednesday morning group have returned to driving post-stroke and Sarah (a member for over four years) was **thrilled to pass her driving test** and become one of them.

When Sarah drove herself to Dyscover for the first time, she was delighted to show her friends her new adapted car. “Here I am at last!! I am so excited about driving again! It’s a milestone !”



A round of applause

Jim, father of member Nick, received a warm reception from Thursday morning members after his slide show of wildlife photos and informative commentary. The **action shots came from his recent trip to Botswana** and included a newly born antelope and a yawning hippo. Members have a shared interest in photography and good conversations were generated.

Groups in action

Beautiful places

We asked members to share information about the most beautiful places they had visited. **Nial** drew on his expertise as a media editor to **write a short quiz**. Each photo was of a landmark with the main feature removed. Where on earth is this place? Then the answer was revealed.

Giving members the opportunity to share their skills and knowledge in our group sessions is key to Dyscover's philosophy of building and enriching life participation, thereby promoting and improving long-term stroke recovery.



Survival skills



Thursday morning and afternoon members were given a thought-provoking team challenge. They had to pick five items from a selection of objects to help them **survive in the desert after a plane crash**. They had to agree on the items and justify their choices, leading to some lively discussions.



News from Kingston

A number of structured conversation topics this term have centred around encouraging members to share information about themselves using communication techniques such as drawing or using props. Topics have included "achievements and claims to fame".

John brought in a wonderful photo showing when he met Joanna Lumley at a Gurkhas' lunch. He talked fondly about the occasion.



Kevin told members how he goes to the gym each week. He explained through his drawings the machines he uses to build strength in different parts of his body. The group were impressed by Kevin's motivation.



Martin brought in his photos and a medal that he received at the end of a successful cricket tour in Dubai in the 1990s.

Have you Heard

PPA News

We are now over six months into a year-long project to develop Dyscover's service for people with **Primary Progressive Aphasia (PPA)**. Since the start of the project, 29 people with PPA have been referred to Dyscover.

We want more health professionals working in dementia to know about us, so we have introduced a termly **online PPA visitor session**. The first of these drew 11 Speech and Language Therapists.

Rosemary continues to co-lead a UK-wide network for SLTs working with PPA. Membership has grown steadily to over 100. She is also one of the **UK SLTs in an international alliance**, led by Dr Anna Volkmer, which now extends to 13 countries,

Dyscover's expertise is in providing person-centred, long-term support for people with aphasia. However, the **needs of people with PPA are different** from those who have aphasia after stroke. Short term interventions, either 1:1 with a SLT, or a series of sessions in a small group, suit this community better than open ended groups.

Bruce Willis.

We are glad that Bruce Willis and his family finally have a **diagnosis of Primary Progressive Aphasia**, a rare language-led dementia. It is great that aphasia is being talked about in the media, We hope that we can convey **the important role that SLTs play** in all forms of aphasia.

Our golfers' new venue

Golf, one of our most popular Challenge activities, has a new venue – **Betchworth Park Golf Club**.

Inspirations from Barry

During our Visitor Week, members of the Thursday afternoon Foundation Group enjoyed a visit from **Barry, one of our Aphasia Ambassadors**. Barry gave a fascinating talk about his life since he had a stroke 12 years ago. He showed



photos of **some of the challenges he has taken on**, including volunteering for the opening of the Paralympics in 2012. He also showed thrilling photos of many daring activities he has challenged himself to do, including scaling the roof of the O2. Members found his talk inspiring. Barry's overriding message to these members who have had strokes in the last 1 to 3 years was "there is life after stroke and in spite of disability, **there is much you can**

Online Aphasia Forum

Thirty people with aphasia met for the 9th Online Forum to discuss Moving On. There were **inspiring examples from a couple of our Ambassadors** (Maggie and Paul) and Speakeasy (in Bury) members. Then they broke into small groups to discuss timing, opportunities and what helps progress and recovery.

Congratulations

Former member Nick writes, "Louise and I **got married on 24th March** this year. Lovely day supported by family and friends, but most notably with the blessings from our four children Joe, Oliver, Molly and Phoebe." Nick is a member of our Marketing Committee.



Fundraising

Whodunnit?

100 guests attended our sell-out **Crime Scene Investigation Event**. The evening was a huge success and raised an incredible £2,610! The host, a retired senior Scotland Yard Detective, was very knowledgeable and entertaining; guests said that they really enjoyed the evening.

Our audience investigated a real murder

case and learnt all about forensics, including getting very messy dusting for fingerprints! Congratulations to the winning team, The Vixens of Dock Green!



Boost from Joel

Our grateful thanks to celebrity, Joel Dommett, who raised a fantastic £4,800 for Dyscover during Celebrity Catchphrase. Aired on ITV in the primetime 6pm slot, **Joel managed to say some lovely things about Dyscover** ('with a y') and even included **aphasia**. We had a number of telephone and email enquiries after the show.



Lions' surprise

Three Leatherhead Lions visited our Wednesday afternoon group, to find out more about Dyscover and present their donation. Unbeknown to us, the Lions have been working hard to raise money for Dyscover, **following a talk from Ambassador, Nick**. They presented a cheque for £3,000.



Rotary Santa Run

Banstead Rotary continued their support for Dyscover at last year's Santa Run, where we **helped with the collections in Nork**. We were presented with a cheque for £300.

Coming up

21 MAY

BANSTEAD ROTARY CHARITY WALK

8.5 miles, starting and finishing at Tattenham Corner. Full details from Liz at: lgrace@dyscover.org.uk

SKYDIVE BY ONLINE VOLUNTEER TAE

Full details of the 10,000ft dive and support Tae at:

<https://www.justgiving.com/page/taehorsfield-dyscover-skydive>

24 JUNE 3-7pm

**SUE EDWARDS' OPEN GARDEN WITH MUSIC
The Firs, The Hoppety, Tadworth KT20 5RQ**

Mole Valley Lottery

Everyone at our Kingston group was very pleased to welcome Julian back, following a recent stay in hospital. They were also thrilled to hear that Julian and his wife Janet had recently **won a great £2k prize** in the Mole Valley Community Lottery. Congratulations to Janet and Julian and thank you so much for supporting Dyscover!

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

Bookham Bees

The Bookham Bees ran a Murder Mystery night for Dyscover. Office Manager, Karen got a team together and managed to be the first to solve the murder! Karen reports "What a great evening; **brilliant interactive mystery using QR codes and actors**. Well organised and tremendous fun - raising £800 for Dyscover at the same time!"

Holiday Activities

Twenty-six members took part in the Easter Challenge Programme, with a total of 38 attendances.

Horse riding

Horsley, Bookham and Leatherhead RDA hosted a session at **their brand new accessible facilities** in Effingham. The hydraulic lift and trained staff, along with a strong team of volunteers, made this a special experience for us and **we hope to return again** later this year.



Chat

Several members met at Squires in Twickenham for a coffee and chat. A number of people, including two Zoom members, **enjoyed the chance to meet face-to-face** and to share common interests.



Pilates

Natalie met with the regulars (and some newcomers) for a face-to-face class. This time she used the ball to encourage **extra focus on the core muscles**, while including arm and leg movements.



Art

Art is a regular fixture on the Challenge programme. This time we **used acrylics for the first time** and created some gorgeous bluebell wood images.



Top Draw Club

Our Top Draw Club raised the **splendid total of £2,200 for Dyscover** in the last financial year. Which means that the same amount was distributed in prizes. Many thanks to Nick for all his hard work running the club.

Shares cost just £10 per year and offer the chance to win **cash prizes every quarter** and in our Christmas bonus draw.

Contact Liz lgrace@dyscover.org.uk for more information. about joining our Top Draw Club.

CONTACT US

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