

Breastfriends Cardiff and Vale Breast Cancer Support Group

August 2022

Fresh and Fruity..... Strawberry Tea is Back!



A huge thank you to everyone who came along to our Strawberry Tea and helped make the evening a resounding success. It was so lovely to see so many familiar faces and some new ones as well. Listening to the chatter in the room, it was hard to believe that we hadn't seen each other for such a long time. Our thanks as always to Annabel Borley, Breast Consultant at Velindre Cancer Centre. Thank you also to Kaye and Lynn for the delicious cakes and to everyone who donated prizes and bought tickets for our fabulous raffle. The evening raised £276.70.

Sue Youngman

Who are we?

Breastfriends, described by one of our members as a source of instant friendship, is a friendly support group for anyone who has had a diagnosis of breast cancer, whether it was last week, last month, last year or many years ago.

Breast cancer can be isolating and scary, but meeting others in a similar situation and sharing information and experiences can make a real difference.



Walk with us or talk with us

We meet once a month in Cardiff and once a month in Barry as well as meeting regularly for short walks in lovely surroundings. **See back page for more details.**

We know that walking into a room of strangers can be off putting, so please get in touch if you'd like a buddy for your first walk or meeting.

www.breastfriendscandv.org.uk

Welcome Back! A Message from our Chair

It was really wonderful to see so many of you at the Strawberry Tea in June. As well as having Dr Annabel Borley's update on advances in breast cancer treatment, Elaine Nicholas gave us an interesting update on Breast Cancer Now's Moving Forward courses (see page 6). We were also able to catch up, chat, eat yummy cakes and share news with (Breast) friends, who we haven't see for so long.

What next? Well this is our first newsletter since November 2020 and we hope you enjoy reading it and find the articles included informative and useful. Our walks, both in Cardiff and Barry have proven to be very popular and you are all welcome to join in. The details are included in this Newsletter.

Following on from the success of restarting the Barry Breastfriends face to face meetings, we feel we are now in a position to restart the Cardiff meetings. These will be held in our usual venue, the Margaret

Whittaker Lounge. The details of our meetings are also included in the Newsletter and we hope as many of you as possible will be able to attend.

Looking forward to seeing you on the 9th September, at our first Cardiff meeting or on 16th September at the next Barry meeting.

With very best wishes

Maggie Hourihan (Chair)



Elaine Nicholas presents an update on Breast Cancer Now's Moving Forward courses.

News and Developments

By Dr Annabel Borley

As well as facemasks and virtual clinics, the last 2 years have also brought exciting new developments and treatment options for breast cancer.

As lockdown loomed in March 2020, the results of the Fast Forward trial were published. This pioneering study involved more than 4000 patients who had undergone surgery for early stage breast cancer between 2011 and 2014, including 172 Velindre participants. The clinical trial evaluated the effectiveness of 5 days of radiotherapy compared to the standard 15 days over 3 weeks. The researchers found the shorter course of radiotherapy was as safe and effective as the longer course, bringing major benefits in terms of convenience but also for healthcare systems globally.

Another development saving time and discomfort for people with HER2 positive breast cancer is the introduction of PHESGO. This new drug combines pertuzumab and trastuzumab in a single injection, and takes just a few minutes to give. Previously, treatment required an intravenous drip and at least a 2-hour appointment to administer the equivalent treatment.

More recently, NICE has approved the use of a new and effective treatment for those with secondary triple negative breast cancer. Trodevly, also known as sacituzumab govitecan (or SG for short!) is a biological medicine comprising an antibody combined with a chemotherapy drug, meaning the drug can be targeted directly at the cancer cells.

For decades hormonal therapy has been used to reduce the risk of a breast cancer recurrence after surgery. Abemaciclib is a drug already used for women with hormone positive secondary breast cancer, but a study has shown that it can reduce the risk of recurrence for those with higher risk early breast cancer by a third. It too has recently been approved by NICE.

All of these new treatments are possible because of the many thousands of women who have participated in clinical trials worldwide and locally, and we are grateful to them and their families.



Dr Annabel Borley at our Strawberry Tea event

Dates for Your Diary

Face to face Moving Forward courses take place over two consecutive weeks and are delivered by a Moving Forward facilitator, in partnership with NHS hospitals.

Online Moving Forward courses also take place over two consecutive weeks and will give you the chance to share your experiences, get tips from breast cancer experts and connect with others.

You can attend Moving Forward either at our face-to-face course or take part by joining online. Find a course near you or register for an online course at: breastcancer.org.uk/movingforward or call us on 03457 077 1893.

To find out more and to register to join a course, scan the QR code with your mobile:



Menopause Information Sessions

Maggie's, Velindre Road, Cardiff, CF14 2TQ

- ◆ 1st and 3rd Monday of each month
- ◆ 10am - 12noon
- ◆ Maximum of 5 participants per session

To book a place, please contact Maggie's
02922 408024

**BREAST
CANCER
NOW** Cymru

Moving Forward, Cardiff
9.30am—1pm
Wednesdays 19 & 26 October

Moving Forward, Bridgend
9.30am—1pm
Thursdays 8 & 15 September

Moving Forward, Newport
10am - 1pm
Wednesdays, 12th & 19th Oct

Online courses run weekly on various days
and times



Your Breastfriends committee is always looking for ideas for future face-to-face meetings, so if there is a topic you think we could cover or a speaker we could invite to talk about a particular aspect of healthcare or self-help then please let us know by emailing:

info@breastfriendscandv.org.uk

If you are over 70..... Message from South East Wales Breast Screening Centre

'We will not invite you, but you are still able to be screened if you wish. Please ask us for an appointment by getting in touch with your local Breast Test Wales screening centre. Screening is only available every three years'.

South East Wales Breast Screening Centre, 18 Cathedral Road, Cardiff, CF11 9LJ. Telephone: (029) 2039 7222

Searching for a Ray of Light

The Ray of Light cancer support charity will be joining us for our Cardiff meeting in November.

Katie Mottram explains what the organisation can do to support people with experience of cancer.



Ray of Light Cancer Support was born due to first-hand experience of the loneliness and isolation felt when someone receives a cancer diagnosis. We realised there were few services available at the time offering support to the whole family.

A cancer diagnosis can have a huge impact on everyone, and we understand that reaching out for support can be difficult. Our support is free to access, safe and non-judgemental. Our hope is that you will feel less alone. We offer many opportunities for patients, carers, family members and friends. We deliver a confidential service and a listening ear in a friendly, relaxed environment.

Some of the ways in which we support people include:

- ◇ Telephone befriending
- ◇ Bereavement support
- ◇ Arts and crafts groups
- ◇ Angus Book Club
- ◇ Warblers Choir
- ◇ Outdoor nature-based activities
- ◇ Family events

We also offer courses such as Energy Awareness, Totally Digitized and Little steps 4 weeks course

We are really looking forward to working alongside Breastfriends to increase support and are pleased to have been invited to visit with you in November. We hope to be able to answer any questions you may have and discuss in more detail how we may be able to offer support to you, your family, and friends.



Ray of Light Cancer Support provides free support to patients, carers, friends and families affected by cancer.

Email: contactus@rayoflightwales.org.uk

Telephone: 07971 349703

Website: rayoflightwales.org.uk

Moving Forward Update

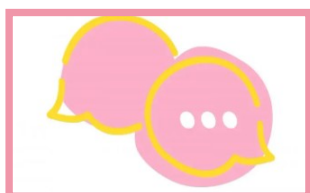
By Elaine Nicholas

Before the pandemic, Breast Cancer Now ran four-week, face to face Moving Forward courses, in partnership with the NHS, for people who have finished treatment and wanted some support moving on with their lives. There was quite a lot of variation in the content and the way the courses were run, so we took some time during the pandemic to review and develop our new Moving Forward course.

After consultation with service users, staff, volunteers and health care professionals, we have now introduced a course with two 3.5-hour sessions run over consecutive weeks. Where possible, the courses will be in the morning, to avoid lunch and school runs.

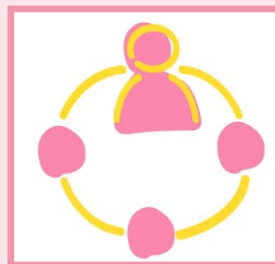
People joining us on the Moving Forward course will be able to connect with other people who have had similar experiences in a safe and supportive space. Here is an outline of how the course is organised:

- ◆ **The first session** introduces the concept of looking back to move forward, giving participants the chance to share some of their concerns and be given information about further support.
- ◆ **The online platform** gives access to videos on subjects such as healthy eating, exercise, managing menopausal symptoms, breast and body awareness, and many more.



- ◆ **The journal** features women telling their story to provide hope and inspiration to the reader. We wanted to create a resource for people to actively engage with the in-person sessions in a way that encourages processing and reflection. Our journal includes a mixture of personal experience, space to reflect, practical tools, and useful information and resources.
- ◆ **The second session** focuses on reflection on the previous week, looking at the online content and journal, focusing on wellbeing and setting positive intentions to move forwards. There is also an hour-long Q&A session supported by the local breast care team.

After several successful pilots, we are also able to offer online courses that follow the same structure as the face-to-face model. The online courses offer two three-hour sessions on Zoom with a maximum of 15 service users. Participants receive a link to an editable version of the journal and a link to the online platform. As of September, Moving Forward Online will be running one course a week.



For more information, visit:
Breastcancer.org/movingforward

Remembering two special Breastfriends

During lockdown, we lost two lovely ladies who were inspirational members of our group, Elinor Ludlow and Pam Allinson.

Elinor was our oldest and much respected member and her sunny disposition and happy smile would always brighten our Cardiff group meetings even on the dullest of afternoons. She once said that Breastfriends was like a huge blanket providing warmth, kindness and security to its members. Elinor was very much part of that warmth and kindness and we would miss her when she wasn't there.

We were touched to receive a donation from Elinor after her passing, because it clearly demonstrated that Breastfriends was as special to her, as she was to us.

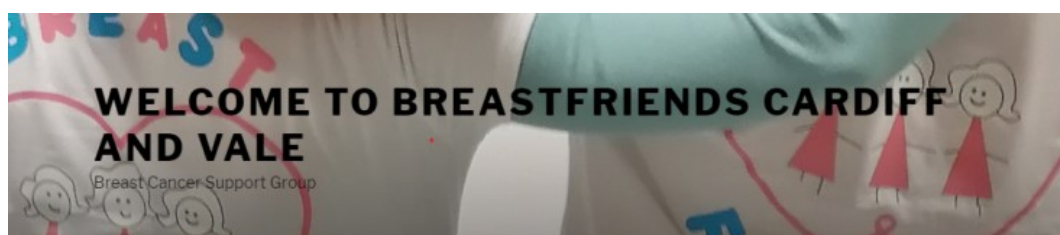


Pam was well known in the breast cancer world as someone who campaigned tirelessly to improve the lives of women with breast cancer.

She joined our committee in 2004 and was instrumental in setting up the Barry branch of Breastfriends in 2008 for those in the Vale who might find it difficult to travel into Cardiff.

Pam's involvement with Breastfriends sadly came to an abrupt end when she suffered a debilitating stroke in 2016 but thanks to Jenny, Rosina, Linda and Dawn who picked up the reins of Barry Breastfriends, her legacy lives on.

Visit our website - www.breastfriendscandv.org.uk





What's on at Breastfriends

Join us at one of our meetings

Cardiff Meetings

Our Cardiff group meets on these dates from **1pm-3pm** at the **Margaret Whittaker Lounge, Rhiwbina, Cardiff, CF14 6LX** unless otherwise stated

Friday 9th September
Tea or coffee and a chat

Friday 14th October
TBC

Friday 11th November
Ray of Light Cancer Charity

Friday 9th December
Christmas party & quiz

Barry Meetings

Our Barry group meets on these dates from **2pm-4pm** at the **Mary Lennox Room, Barry Hospital, Colcot Road, Barry, CF62 8YH**

Friday 16th September

Friday 21st October

Friday 18th November

Friday 16th December

For more information on the Barry meetings please call Jenny on 07855 020905

Walk and talk with Breastfriends

We meet **every Tuesday (weather permitting)** for a short leisurely walk followed by coffee and maybe cake!

Barry walks alternate between Barry Island and the Knap and start at 10.30am.
Please contact Jenny on 07855 020905

Cardiff Walks meet **by the lighthouse in Roath Park** at **10.30 am** for a walk around the lake
(Please contact Sue on 07773 500525 for more info)



Contact Us

You can leave a message for us with Breast Cancer Now on **029 2280 2900**

Or email: info@breastfriendscandv.org.uk

Please check our website for up-to-date information
www.breastfriendscandv.org.uk

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