

Breastfriends Cardiff and Vale Breast Cancer Support Group

November 2023



We are 20!
See inside for more about our fashion show



Celebrating in Style



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

Breastfriends Fashion Show



The October fashion show was a wonderful way of celebrating Breastfriends 20th anniversary, raising an amazing £1,112.90 to boot!

Many people say that going through breast cancer can result in a loss of confidence, so refreshing our wardrobe can be just the boost we need and Kath, the owner of local boutique Calon Rhiwbeina, was on hand to help five of our members rediscover their love of clothes.

Models Sharon, Maggie, Justine, Fran and Margaret did a fantastic job strutting down the catwalk at Canolfan Beulah on 13th October demonstrating 4 outfits suitable for that special occasion, a walk in the

countryside, relaxing at home and everyday wear. The show came at exactly the right time of year with summer fading and colder autumn days on the horizon.

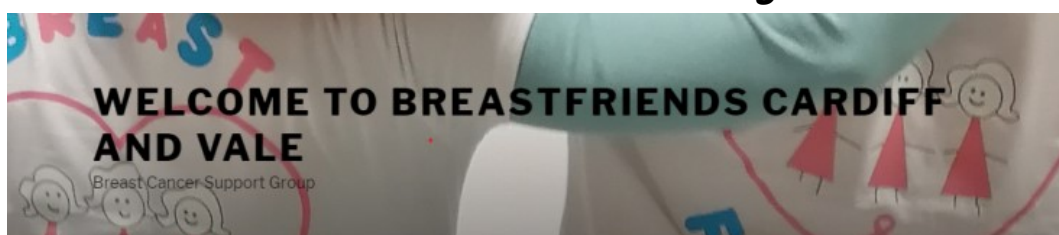
Over 60 people attended the show and enjoyed a glass of fizz as Kath introduced the models and provided tips on how to jazz up outfits with reasonably priced scarves and jewellery.

The atmosphere was buzzing and some of those attending were keen to pop into the shop after the show to snap up some of the lovely items, some that had only just arrived that day.

We are extremely grateful to Kath and volunteers who made the evening such a tremendous success.



www.breastfriendscandv.org.uk





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/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:



Managing Menopausal Symptoms

A free 2.5 hour session on managing the menopausal symptoms that are all too often a side effect of breast cancer. The session is presented by Gail Williams, Oncology Nurse Specialist in breast cancer and takes place at Velindre Hospital. For more information or to book onto a session, please call Gail Williams or Karen Kendell. 02920 615888 ext 4678

**BREAST
CANCER
NOW** Cymru

Moving Forward courses

Cardiff

Wednesdays 6 & 13 December 9.30 to 1pm

Swansea

Tuesdays 30 January & 6 February 9.30 to 1pm

Newport

Wednesdays 31 January & 7 February 9.30 – 1pm

Abergavenny

Thursdays 7 & 14 March 9.30 to 1pm

Moving Forward Online runs every week.

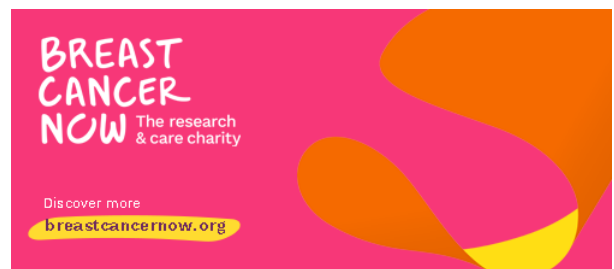
The next Younger Women Together Online:

Tuesdays 20, 27 February & 5, 12 March 2024
7pm to 8.15pm

Younger Women Together Speakers Live:

Thursday 16 November, 7- 8.15pm:
Healthy Eating with Nathalie Jones

Tuesday 9 January 2024, 7 -8.15pm:
Menopause and cancer with Dani Binnington



Christmas is coming!

Join us for a festive get-together at our Cardiff meeting on Friday, 9th December.



See back page for details

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

Our Meetings

May Cardiff Meeting – Paper Flowers Craft Afternoon

There is increasing awareness of the benefit to mental wellbeing of taking up hobbies. Breastfriends has regularly featured different crafts, exercises and skills in its annual programme as well as arranging weekly walks in local parks.

In May we were treated to a demonstration from Suzie Curtis, creating ornamental flowers from pages of books and magazines. Under Suzie's instructions members were soon creating their own decorations and found it very therapeutic as well as rewarding. Just be careful if displaying them near the aromatherapy candles!



If you have any suggestions for activities we could try at our meetings or if you have a skills you'd be happy to share, please get in touch:

Email: info@breastfriendscandv.org.uk



Our Story—20 years of Cardiff and Vale Breastfriends

By Emma Burns

Thinking about **Breastfriends celebrating its 20th anniversary** fills me with pride and joy. It is quite amazing to think of what we have achieved.

I was there at the beginning, more or less. The initial concept of a local breast cancer support group came from two counsellors who worked at Tenovus Cancer Care, Julie and Sian.

Julie and Sian brought together a number of women, who had used the free counselling services offered by Tenovus, to discuss whether any of us would be interested in helping to set up a group. The first meeting was held at Velindre and I remember the room being quite full. The general feeling was that we wanted to do something, but we were not completely sure what the something looked like. We were all quite sure however that we didn't want to hold future meetings in a hospital setting if at all possible, as we'd had quite enough of hospitals.

That was when Ruth Williams, the current treasurer, piped up about the possibility of using the Margaret Whittaker Lounge, in Rhiwbina for free. It sounded perfect and shortly after that initial meeting, a small group of women began meeting in the lounge. I missed the first few meetings because I was trying to get back to work, but I think I turned up at around the fifth or sixth.

Initially all the meetings were attended by either Julie or Sian from Tenovus and they kept the mailing list. We quite quickly decided, however, that we wanted to be independent of Tenovus so that we could control our funds, develop links with all the main cancer charities and free up Julie and Sian so they could focus on delivering counselling. We formed a committee, with our first Chair being Jane Brooks. I was the secretary/communications person and Ruth became treasurer. Judith Evans was also a key member at the beginning.

The first thing we did was to think about exactly what we wanted to offer. We initially came up with the name Cardiff and Vale Breast Cancer Support Group, to mirror the Cardiff and Vale NHS Trust area, but later adopted the name 'Breastfriends', because it was so much more welcoming. We wanted to be a drop-in support group where people with breast cancer could meet, if they wanted to, but without any obligation.

We decided to have speakers, but always ensured there was plenty of time for a chat. An early decision was to always have name badges for everyone at meetings, so we didn't have to worrying about offending anyone through forgetting their names, as a result of our foggy chemo brains!

We decided to get our own bank account and register as a charity. A graphic designer kindly designed a logo for us for free and we have used it ever since. We started a newsletter and produced leaflets and a website to publicise our existence, so that we could be found by the people that needed us. We also worked hard to get interesting speakers and threw in a couple of special events from time to time, plus some fun and some pampering.

Thinking back, three of my personal favourite meetings were:

- ◇ Our first lingerie evening at M & S in Culverhouse Cross. It was far easier to get my wonky scarred breasts out for a bra fitting when there were twenty of us, rather than just me on my own.
- ◇ The belly dancer who talked to us about the history of the dance and taught us a few moves.
- ◇ Laughter therapy. This was an evening meeting with just a few of us. I went feeling very grumpy and stressed about work, but ended the evening with the biggest smile on my face having ended up properly crying with laughter.

When Breast Cancer Care opened an office in Cardiff, we invited them to come and speak at a meeting. Several of us decided to apply to become Someone Like Me volunteers and through that process became trained in offering support. We brought our new knowledge back to the group and organised some training, through Macmillan, on best practice in cancer support groups.

It was always very important to us that we recognised our boundaries and did not purport to give medical advice when we were not qualified to do so or promote inaccurate information about treatments or dodgy so called 'miracle cures'. We continue to follow our ground rules today, including respecting confidentiality and individual choice.

Our Story—20 years of Cardiff and Vale Breastfriends

We built strong links with our health care professionals so that they would refer people to us and we, in turn, raised some money for the new Breast Unit at Llan-dough, so they would have nice magazines for the waiting room, rather than horrible old ones. Not a big thing, but important.

Very sadly, Jane Brooks developed secondary breast cancer from which she later died. I took over as Chair from her and promised to make sure I would keep the group going. I carried on as Chair until June 2014 when I stood down because in the meantime, I had become a trustee of Breast Cancer Care and was about to become its UK Chair.

Maggie Hourihan was the perfect successor. But the strength of Breastfriends is that we have always been so very lucky to have such amazing volunteer committee members who share the work and who very

much deserved those chocolate Nobel prize winning medals Sir Martin Evans brought back from Sweden for us.

The group has gone from strength to strength since I left. When Breast Cancer Care decided not to offer walking sessions in Cardiff, Breastfriends took them over and they have been a brilliant success. It is also great to see the group in Barry, the brainchild of Pam Allinson, is thriving.

It is now over twenty years since I was diagnosed with breast cancer. For me, the emotional and physical journey since then has been made far easier by meeting and talking to others with similar experiences. Thank you all so much for being there for me and for each other. Together we have created a fantastic thing!

A Tribute to Rosina Butler

Earlier this year Breastfriends lost a dear colleague. Rosina Butler was an active and enthusiastic member of the Barry Group and an amazing fundraiser for Breakthrough Breast Cancer and Breast Cancer Now.

Paying tribute to fellow member and close friend, Jenny of the Barry group said *'Rosina was the kindest person you could ever hope to meet. She had a wonderful sense of humour and her energy for fundraising was boundless.'* Rosina was a very keen crafter and was making gift boxes for Mother's Day right up until she passed away.

As well as making craft items to sell she organised quiz nights and numerous other fundraising events. Always positive, Rosina was asked what drove her to support local and national breast cancer charities. She explained that she did not want her granddaughters to experience the same traumatic time she had gone through.

It is a tribute to Rosina and her amazing fundraising efforts that research, support and treatment for breast cancer has improved immeasurably over recent years. We all have cause to remember what a wonderful person she was and the legacy she has left behind.



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, November 10th
Aromatherapy with Angela Green

Friday December 8th,
Christmas party

Friday, January 12th
Coffee/Tea, cake and chat

Friday, February 9th
Breast Care Nurse from Llandough, Hannah Shore

Friday, March 8th
Physiotherapist from Velindre

Friday, April 12th
Easter Quiz and Chocolate

Barry Meetings

Our Barry group meets on these dates from **2pm-4pm** and take place at the **Tadcross Hotel, 271 Holton Road, Barry CF63 4HT**

Friday, November 17th
Gabriella Juma, Medical Genetics

Friday, December 15th
Relaxation with Judith Floyd

Friday, January 19th
TBC

Friday, February 16th
TBC

Friday, March 15th
TBC

Friday, April 19th
TBC

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 for more information



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 information

Contact Us

Phone: messages care of Breast Cancer Now Cymru on 0845 0771894

Please check our website for up-to-date information

Email: info@breastfriendscandv.org.uk

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