

Breastfriends Cardiff and Vale Breast Cancer Support Group

September 2018

Celebrating 15 years of friendship and support!



Mandy McLachlan (left) will be one of 8 inspirational ladies taking to the catwalk on Friday, October 19th to celebrate 15 years of Breastfriends.

See page 5

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

Fit for Life



Getting fit to live life to the full is important for everybody, especially those who have had a cancer diagnosis. There is evidence that physical activity can improve the quality of life for cancer patients when it comes to body image, emotional wellbeing, sexuality, sleep, social functioning, anxiety, fatigue and pain.¹

Physical activity has been shown to improve outcomes for people who have been diagnosed with breast cancer. Studies have shown that moderate exercise can reduce the risk of breast cancer recurring and can reduce the risk of death from breast cancer, especially in hormone-receptor positive tumours.¹

Exercise is also a great way to meet new people, make friends, provide peer support and is a lot of fun!

How much exercise should I be doing?

The current recommendations are that adults should spend 150 minutes every week doing moderate intensity aerobic activity, or 75 minutes doing vigorous activity, or a mixture of both. Aerobic activity describes activities which increase your heart rate and breathing rate — exercises like walking, jogging, dancing and cycling. A good way to gauge the intensity of exercise is whether you're able to talk. With moderate intensity you can speak in short sentences but you couldn't sing a song, whereas with vigorous intense activity you can only say a couple of words at a time.

It's good to split the 150 minutes so you do 30 minutes over five days. It can be achieved in bouts of 10 minutes, so you don't have to do too much in any one go.

It's also recommended that you do strength work on two days every week. As we get older, we lose our muscle bulk and our power but continuing strength work helps to ensure we can carry on our daily activities for as long as possible. Strength work includes sessions using weights, classes such as circuits and body pump, bodyweight exercises like sit ups and activities such as gardening.

What are the benefits of exercise?

Exercise and being active has a huge impact on many aspects of life. Being fit can reduce your risk of heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes, certain cancers, hip fracture, falls, depression and dementia.² Physical activity is also important in maintaining a healthy weight.

How to be more active

The most important thing is that you exercise safely. Before you start any fitness programme, have a chat with your healthcare professional as some activities may not be suitable.

If you're not sure where to start, ring your GP or local leisure centre and ask for their advice. A lot of regions offer exercise referral schemes, which are classes designed for specific patient groups. I run a community running group in Cardiff, Sirius Running, and we have a 'You Can' programme for anyone who has had a cancer diagnosis. We'd love you to join us!

Dr Emma Short

If anyone would like to know more about our running group, please get in touch. My contact details are:

emmathefitnessdoctor@hotmail.com

<https://www.facebook.com/Emmathefitnessdoctor/>

1. <https://www.cancer.gov/about-cancer/causes-prevention/risk/obesity/physical-activity-fact-sheet>

2. <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise/exercise-health-benefits/>

Breastfriends were centre stage!

Members of the Breastfriends committee were invited to St Illtyd's Catholic High School in June to see a group of young people putting our charity centre stage. The school was participating in an initiative organised by Give First, a national charity which encourages young people to participate in community and charity projects.



Students at the school were asked to select a charity, find out about what the charity does and put together a presentation promoting the work of their favourite good cause. The best team would be given £1,000 for their chosen charity. One class of year 9 students, led by the design technology teacher, Desmond Foley, chose Breastfriends.



The group said they were drawn to us because we are a small group that helps people in a friendly, personal way and they were very keen to help promote Breastfriends to anyone who might need our support. The students asked what type of help we needed and we said we'd like support with getting our message out there with logos, social media presence and a design refresh. The group designed a logo and made keyrings in their design technology classes.

The five students who delivered the presentation did us proud and we were very impressed with the amount of work they had put in. Unfortunately, our team didn't win the prize, but it was great to work with them and we hope to work on more design projects together in the future.

Justine Hankins

Names of students in photograph from left to right - Elise Roberts, Isabel Jacobson, Eve Jones, Jayden O' Sullivan and Nazek Siddiq

Breastfriends (and best friends!) Elaine Nicholas (right) and Sue Youngman are busy training for this year's Cardiff Half Marathon which is also celebrating 15 years. Inspired by Michael Williams (see page 7), they've decided to use our 15th anniversary to raise the profile of Breastfriends and also raise some extra funds for our charity.



This iconic 13.1 mile event takes place on 07 October and Elaine and Sue will be wearing specially designed t-shirts that will incorporate our usual logo with the St Illtyd's year 9 design featured above.

Good Luck ladies!

www.virginmoneygiving.com/breastfriendscardiffhalf2018

Dates for Your Diary

Breast Cancer Care Cymru Dates

Moving Forward Courses

This free four week course (one morning per week) covers a range of topics to help you move forward after treatment. Expert speakers are happy to answer questions and there's time to share experiences with people in a similar situation to you.

Moving Forward, Cardiff

10am - 1pm

Wednesdays 05 September—26 September 2018

Tuesdays 06 November—27 November 2018

Moving Forward, Llantrisant

10am – 1pm

Thursdays 04 October - 25 October 2018

Moving Forward, Bridgend

10am – 1pm

Fridays 05 October - 26 October 2018

Family and Friends Event, Cardiff

5pm—7.30pm

Tuesday, 18 September 2018

Breast Reconstruction Information Session, Cardiff

10am—12.30pm

Tuesday, 25 September 2018

Lingerie Evening, Cardiff

5.30pm—7.30pm

Thursday, 11 October 2018

Booking is essential for the above Breast Cancer Care Cymru events.

Please call 0345 077 1894 or e-mail
cym@breastcancercare.org.uk for more info.

Living with Secondary Breast Cancer

has been designed to give you the opportunity to meet other people living with a secondary diagnosis and get relevant information and support.



In Cardiff there are regular (usually monthly) meet-ups where you can chat and share experiences with others with a secondary diagnosis. Topics include pain management, fatigue, benefits, and side effects sessions – we also welcome suggestions for topics you would like to cover.

If anyone is interested in the Living with Secondary Breast Cancer service they can contact Breast Cancer Care Cymru on 0845 077 1893 or email secondaryservices@breastcancercare.org.uk

Friday, 21 September 2018, 11am—3 pm,

Speaker to be confirmed

Followed by lunch and meet up

Friday, 19 October 2018, 11am – 1pm, Meet up

Friday, 16 November 2018, 11am—3 pm,

Art Therapy (TBC)

Followed by lunch and meet up

Friday, 14 December 2018, 11am – 1pm, Meet up

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 Helen Harris on 029 2031 6979

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

Celebrating 15 years of friendship and support (from page 1)

On Friday, October 19th, eight inspirational models will take to the catwalk to celebrate 15 years of Breastfriends and one of those ladies will be Mandy McLachlan.

Mandy joined Breastfriends soon after her diagnosis in April 2016 and has been a familiar face at both our Cardiff meetings and our Tuesday morning walks. 'I find Breastfriends really useful, especially with everyone being at different stages' says Mandy. 'No matter how much support we get from family and friends, there's nothing like talking to someone who's been through it'.

Mandy met husband, Scott, in 1992 and they travelled extensively together, spending a year in South America and 6 months in Asia, before Mandy popped the question on February 29th, 1996 during a stay in Kathmandu. They married in Sri Lanka in May 2001.

Mandy's breast cancer diagnosis at the age of 48 came 16 years after a diagnosis of multiple sclerosis (MS) in June 2000. Mandy had her two daughters, Jena and Carys, now aged 11 and 14, before starting five cycles of treatment for MS which lasted from 2007 to 2015.

'The treatment I had for MS was a type of chemotherapy' says Mandy 'so I was unable to have further chemotherapy for my breast cancer. I wasn't able to have radiotherapy either so was limited to surgery, tamoxifen and zoladex. I often suffer from fatigue but don't know if it's cancer related fatigue or MS related fatigue. After a really bad MS relapse in 2006, I decided to reduce my working hours from full time to three days a week. I was able to swap my days off after my return to work following cancer surgery so that I could still walk on a Tuesday'.

Mandy and Scott wanted a special family celebration to mark the end of Mandy's breast cancer treatment so they volunteered, as a family, to spend a week helping out at a turtle project on Tioman Island in Malaysia. 'It was amazing' recalls Mandy 'we spent our time doing beach clean ups and looking for turtles and eggs, and we all absolutely loved it. We then spent a further two weeks travelling around'.



I asked Mandy if she was looking forward to being a model and she said she was really excited about having nails like Sharon! Sharon Eley, another of our Tuesday walkers, always has the most beautiful nails and Mandy and Sharon have decided to have matching nails for the night.

Joining Mandy and Sharon on the catwalk for this very special event will be Jenny Evans, Kaye Mundy, Elaine Nicholas, Dawn Parsons, Linda Watts and Ruth Williams.

We do hope you'll be able to join us. **Sue Youngman**



Breastfriends Fashion Show

Celebrating 15 years of friendship and support!
Kindly sponsored by Calon Rhiwbeina

Friday, October 19th, 7pm
Canolfan Beulah, Rhiwbina, CF14 6LX

Tickets £10

(incl. glass of wine and 10% off at Calon Rhiwbeina valid until 19th December 2018)

Tickets from Calon Rhiwbeina or Breastfriends Cardiff and Vale



News from Breast Cancer Care



I have been in post as Head of Breast Cancer Care in Wales since January, however, I am not new to the organisation.

I have worked in Breast Cancer Care for nearly five years, initially as Services Development Manager looking at growing our services throughout Wales, engaging with Breast Teams and raising our profile so that those affected by breast cancer can find the information and support they need during this time.

I have spent over 22 years in the charity sector, being a Finance and Business Manager for both Barnardos and the NSPCC and before that the NHS!

I have a real passion for the support we provide. My sister was diagnosed with breast cancer at 42, with two young children, and I saw how she struggled with her diagnosis after treatment.

Breast Cancer Care is like no other organisation I have worked for, the passion and determination of the staff and volunteers to support breast cancer patients in Wales is amazing. I cannot thank them enough.

We will, by the end of the financial year, be running services in every Breast Unit and Health Board in Wales, which is a great achievement. However, there is much more to do in Wales in ensuring every person is given the opportunity to access our support!

Mags Holloway, Head of Breast Cancer Care, Wales

Strawberry Tea and AGM



Thank you so much to everyone who came along to our annual Strawberry Tea and AGM in June which raised £310 for our funds.

A special thank you to our guest speaker, Dr Helen Passant, for her interesting and informative talk on recent developments in the treatment of breast cancer. The update on oncotype DX, which will result in fewer patients undergoing chemotherapy, was especially welcome.

Our Strawberry Tea is a very special event in our calendar and it's always a pleasure to see so many familiar faces enjoy the mouth watering selection of Kaye's cakes!

As we approach the 15th anniversary of Breastfriends, our group continues to thrive and the Tuesday morning walks in both Barry and Cardiff have added an extra dimension to the support we provide. The success of Breastfriends is testament to the enthusiasm and commitment of our committee members, past and present. Fresh faces are always welcome on the committee and I'm pleased to report that Gill Harris and Wendy Jones were elected at the AGM to join myself, Ruth Williams, Jane Shatford, Margaret Warren, Jane Reynolds, Kaye Mundy, Justine Hankins, Elaine Nicholas and Sue Youngman.

I'd also like to extend my warm thanks to Rosina Butler, Jenny Evans, Linda Watts and Dawn Parsons for continuing the work that Pam Allinson started with the Barry group. Pam suffered a stroke two years ago and is often in our thoughts.

On a personal note, I'm really excited about the fashion show on Friday, October 19th to celebrate our 15th anniversary. We are very fortunate to have Calon Rhiwbeina sponsor this event and my sincere thanks go to Kath Smith for all her help and support.

Maggie Hourihan, Chair, Breastfriends Cardiff and Vale

A personal reflection 15 years on

September 22nd 2018 marks my 15th anniversary of diagnosis, a life changing experience which, I believe, has ultimately made me a far more relaxed, tolerant and nicer person and has taught me so much.

Above all, I've learned that we're all so very different and that there's no right or wrong way of dealing with a difficult time in our lives. We each get through it in our own way and that's absolutely fine. A diagnosis of breast cancer is a time of decisions about surgery and treatment options. We make what is the best decision for us at the time and it's important that others understand and respect that.

I've also learned that the majority of people are kind and helpful. How often have we heard, or even said, the words 'you find out who your friends are'? But do we really, or do we just discover who is best able to cope at that moment in time? Not everyone will be able to meet our expectations of them (especially if we don't share them!) and that may hurt. Some friendships and relationships will survive and thrive while others, that may have been on their last legs anyway, will wither on the vine.

Our news could take friends back to a very difficult time in their lives. Years ago, a good friend lost his sister to breast cancer at a time when losing my Mum to the same disease was still very painful and raw. For very valid reasons, I was that person who crossed the road to avoid talking to him.

'You look so well!' is a phrase we often hear at a time when we feel far from well. Are people being kind, do they think it's what we want to hear or do we look better than they expect because we've put on our brave face along with our makeup that morning? 'It's not my face that's ill' is a great response often used by the lovely Elinor Ludlow, our oldest member. I've learned we don't have to be brave all the time and maybe sometimes it's OK to tell friends and loved ones exactly how we feel.

In a strange way I feel liberated from things that once seemed so important. Housework has most definitely been a casualty of the new me. The poem 'Dust if you must' is framed and proudly displayed on my (often dusty) sideboard. The places that need to be clean are, but I doubt you could eat your dinner off my kitchen floor, and why would you want to anyway! Some may say my standards have dropped whereas I know it's just that my priorities have changed. I no longer worry about what other people think and say. The days of washing my hair and putting on a full face of makeup to pop to the shops for a pint of milk, just in case I bump into someone who'll think 'I've let myself go', are long gone.

By far the greatest benefit for me has been the friends I've made along the way. People from all walks of life providing a strong network of friendship and support, most definitely the best medicine there is!

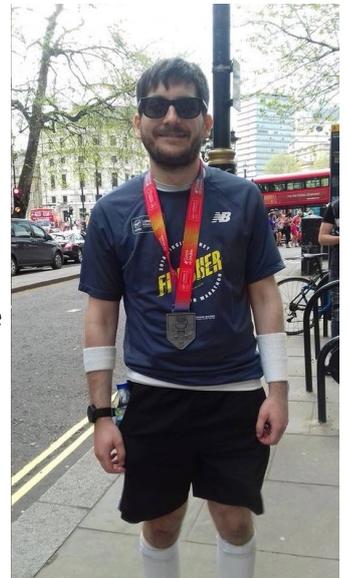
Sue Youngman

And finally

The last word and a huge thank you from us all, goes to Michael Williams who ran the London Marathon for us in April raising an amazing £1,835!

'The phrase 'the hardest thing I've ever done' is a bit overused, but I can honestly say that running the London Marathon yesterday was, without a doubt, exactly that. The extreme heat, the distance, the fact that I was just recovering from an illness, it all stacked up for a punishing and exhausting day. But it is also true that I could not have done it without the support I received during my training and on the day. Thank you for all your encouragement and best wishes, and thanks to all those who donated to Breastfriends Cardiff and Vale breast cancer support group. With your help I made it to the finish!'

Michael Williams, 23 April 2018





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 14th September
Coffee and Chat

Friday 12th October
Positive thoughts
with Dr Teena Coulson, Cardiff University

Friday 19th October, 7pm
at Canolfan Beulah, Rhiwbina, CF14 6LX
Breastfriends 15th Anniversary Fashion Show
Sponsored by Calon Rhiwbeina

Friday 9th November
Lymphoedema Update
with Elaine Nicholas

Friday 14th December
Christmas Party!

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 21st September
Coffee and Chat

Friday 19th October
Coffee and Chat

Friday 16th November
Coffee and Chat

Friday 21st December
Christmas Lunch tba

For more information on the Barry meetings please call Rosina on 01446 745269 or Linda on 01446 710516 / 07967 806073

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 Rosina on 01446 745269 or Linda on 01446 710516/07967 806073 for more info)

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

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

Please check our website for up-to-date information

Email: info@breastfriendscandv.org.uk

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