



## Panto Cheers



30 of us from our branch visited The Cliffs Pavilion in Southend to see the panto. We had plenty of time to chat before the pantomime while enjoying a buffet lunch followed by sweet treats in one of their function rooms where we were looked after by Hannah & her team.

The pantomime this year was Cinderella with Rylan as The Fairy Godfather and was great fun, with loads of audience participation. Full of Southend-on-Sea banter, warmth and wonderful adlibs with costumes and scenery that were amazing.

Hannah continued to look after our group with drinks and ice-cream delivered to our seats during the interval. Our branch fundraises during the year to provide this outing for local people living with MND. Those who couldn't get to the panto had a choice of a gift of flowers, chocolates or a shopping voucher which were arranged by Pat, Gill and Barry.



## Benfleet & Canvey Bowl Club Donation

The club has raised a fantastic £1,520 for our branch which they presented to Marianne.

Mark Scruby is keeping up his efforts to raise money for the MNDA in honour of his Dad who was a member of the club. More triathlons and marathons around the country and in Europe are planned as part of his iron Man competition and his Gofundme page is linked to our branch.



## Charity Day Time Disco

In memory of Joyce, a Charity Day Time Disco for Havens and MND is organised on Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> January at the Moonraker Club in Westcliff - next to the Lion and Lamb pub - just along from Westcliff Rail Station from 2pm to 5.30pm. Tickets are £20 and every penny goes to the charities. There will be a raffle on the day. Please contact Debbie if you want to get tickets.



## Meet Up?

### Meeting Dates

Drop in meetings 2-4pm

**The hospices kindly let us use their lovely rooms for our get togethers. Chat and make friends. We will supply the food and drinks.**

Saturday - St Luke's 10<sup>th</sup> January

Friday - Fair Havens 6<sup>th</sup> February

Saturday St Luke's 7<sup>th</sup> March

Friday - Fair Havens 10<sup>th</sup> April

Saturday St Luke's 2<sup>nd</sup> May

Friday - Fair Havens 5<sup>th</sup> June

Please contact Pat for more information

patricia.ahlquist@mndassociation.org



### Recently Diagnosed Group

3rd Friday of the month via Zoom 2pm.

Allows all affected people to ask any question and find out about available support.

16<sup>th</sup> January / 20<sup>th</sup> February / 20<sup>th</sup> March /

17<sup>th</sup> April / 21<sup>st</sup> May / 8<sup>th</sup> June

Please contact Pat or MND Connect



Other groups available on MNDA website.  
Please scan above QR code.

### South East Region

#### Carers' Coffee and Chat

Evenings: Last Wednesday of the month via Zoom 6.30pm.

28<sup>th</sup> January / 25<sup>th</sup> February / 25<sup>th</sup> March

29<sup>th</sup> April / 27<sup>th</sup> May / 24<sup>th</sup> June

Daytime: 1st Tuesday of the month via Zoom 11am

6<sup>th</sup> January / 3<sup>rd</sup> February / 3<sup>rd</sup> March

7<sup>th</sup> April / 5<sup>th</sup> May / 2<sup>nd</sup> June

Please contact Pat or MND Connect

### South East Region

#### Peer Support Group

3rd Tuesday of the month via Zoom 11am.

20<sup>th</sup> January / 17<sup>th</sup> February / 7<sup>th</sup> March /

21<sup>st</sup> April / 19<sup>th</sup> May / 16<sup>th</sup> June

Please contact Pat or MND Connect

### Veteran's Group

4th Wednesday of the month via Zoom 2.30pm.

28<sup>th</sup> January / 25<sup>th</sup> February / 25<sup>th</sup> March

22<sup>nd</sup> April / 27<sup>th</sup> May / 24<sup>th</sup> June

Please contact Dawn Pond for details  
dawn.pond@mndassociation.org



# Research Update

## Early-stage research investigates whether new drug, M102, can be protective in lab models of MND

A group of researchers at the University of Sheffield's Institute for Translational Neuroscience (SITraN), in collaboration with a biotech company called Aclipse Therapeutics, have developed a drug candidate for MND called M102. Previously, the researchers tested the effects of M102 in a mouse model of MND and they found that it showed signs of being protective towards motor neurons. Now, the researchers have released more early-stage data testing the effects of M102 in mouse and cell models of MND in the lab.

The researchers tested M102 in two different mouse models of MND and found that the drug appeared to protect motor neurons and delay the progression of MND in the mice. They also found that cells that were grown in the lab from people with MND were less harmful to motor neurons following treatment with M102. They found that the drug appears to target multiple pathways which are thought to drive neurodegeneration in MND. These findings suggest that M102 may be able to protect neurons in people with MND and paves the way for future studies that help to further understand the safety and potential effects of M102 as a therapeutic candidate for MND.



## Top-line results announced for the Phase 2a study of SPG302 for MND



Spinogenix have announced top-line results from their Phase 2a study of SPG302 in 23 people with MND. Trial participants were given either SPG302 or a placebo (dummy drug) for 28 days, then all participants received the active treatment for a further 140 days.

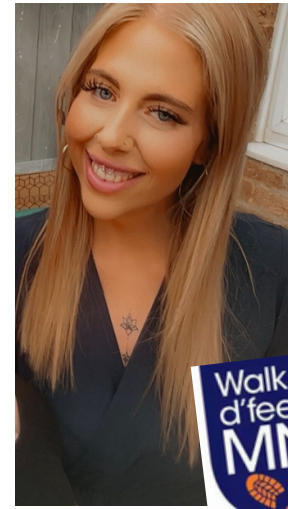
The trial found that SPG302, a once-a-day treatment taken in the form of a pill, was safe and well tolerated by people with MND. 82% of participants treated with SPG302 found that their rate of decline stabilised or improved at the end of the trial, as determined by ALSFRS-R scores. When compared to people with MND who were not in the trial, who are called historical controls, the trial participants showed a 76% slower rate of functional decline. Brain activity recordings showed improvements in brain patterns, which supported the observed improvements to functional decline. Biomarkers measured in the trial also helped to confirm that the drug works as thought within the body. The full results from the trial are expected to be announced at our International Symposium on ALS/MND in San Diego next month.

SPG302 is a new drug that is designed to restore connections between neurons and muscles. This is a new type of regenerative therapy for MND, and these results pave the way for a larger clinical trial to test SPG302 in more people with MND.



## New Volunteer to lead our Walk

Enormous thank you to Michelle Bingham who on top of all her other fundraising activities has organised our Walk for the last 3 years and managed to reach new fundraising heights. Michelle has now passed the baton to Sophie Bell who has accepted the challenge and we are very happy to all work with Sophie to keep on raising the bar and keep the momentum going in raising even more money to help fight MND.



## Bar Sports Marathon

On 21st and 22nd November the **24hr snooker/pool/darts marathon** led by Stuart Bingham at Q Ball sports bar in Basildon raised money for 3 charities and a massive £4,450 for our branch.



## King's New Year Honours List

Alexander Gibson has been awarded an MBE for charitable service in the King's New Year Honours List. Living with MND himself, Alex has shown extraordinary courage and dedication by creating Challenging MND, a charity which has raised £2.4m for those living with MND and their families.

Alex has also written a book

Endurance: Thriving Beyond the Diagnosis <https://amzn.eu/d/3hEBRNZ>



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## WHO'S WHO in your BRANCH

**Stevan Wing:** President  
**Philippe Udrzal:** Chair/committee  
**Pat Ahlquist :** Vice Chair/committee  
**Rowan Harvey :** Treasurer/committee  
**Debbie Darke :** Secretary/committee  
**Marianne Morgan:** committee  
**Kevin Watts :** X/committee  
**Gill Gibson :** committee  
**Barry Mizen :** web master/committee  
**Sophie Bell:** Walk to D'feet

### Association Visitors

**Pat Ahlquist :** branch contact  
**Gill Gibson**  
**Barry Mizen**

**Community Support Coordinator**  
**Chloe Rich**