

**THE 33rd ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE
PARKINSON'S UK GUILDFORD and SOUTH SURREY BRANCH
Tuesday 27 February 2018**

The Chairman, Mr Syd Abraham welcomed Mr Alastair Jack from PUK and Mrs Amanda Dodson, PD specialist Nurse, to the AGM which was very well attended. Syd described 2017-18 as a year of increasing commitment to extending and improving the support offered to Members and their carers. He extended warm thanks to the Committee and other leaders of groups and activities for their unstinting hard work over the year.

The Branch had entered into an arrangement with Age UK to enable the sharing of some social and support services. Looking forward he hoped to make technological aids more widely known and understood and to extend social activities. He reminded members that booking was open for the Dinner and Dance at *The Harbour* hotel on Friday 13 April 2018. He urged members to “have a go” at joining the exercise groups, the choir and the IT course. This was (from his own experience) extremely useful enabling those attending to learn about computing and acquire new skills in a friendly small-scale environment (Full details are on the website and published in *The Park*.)

The Acting Treasurer Sophie Cordice had taken over the role upon Jon Hewitt's resignation. She presented a very satisfactory financial position even though donations were slightly down on the previous year.

Turning to the business of the Elections of Officers and the Committee for 2018-19, it was noted that two members of the Committee, Elizabeth Fuller and Mike Brett, had withdrawn following the Redhill-Reigate Branch separation. John Hewitt and Ian Watson resigned earlier in the year, and David Peacock, who had for many years edited *The Park*, was resigning owing to ill health.

Syd Abraham recorded his appreciation of the support all these Members had given in their service to the Committee. The other serving Members of the Committee were eligible for re-election, so Mrs Angela Campling, Mrs Myra Newnes-Smith and Mrs Margaret Westwood were duly nominated *en bloc*. Syd Abraham was re-elected as Chairman, Mrs Hilary Austin was re-elected as Vice Chair, Sophie Cordice was elected Treasurer and John Oldham as Hon Membership Secretary.. The vacant post of Hon. Secretary remains unfilled. The Chairman stressed that the Branch needed more volunteers to come forward and help support new ventures.

Once the formal business of the meeting was concluded the Members then enjoyed a splendid afternoon tea, a raffle and a highly informative and entertaining talk by Amanda Dodson.

Amanda is the specialist nurse for Parkinson's currently provided under

contract with *Virgin Care* but shortly to be taken over by the Clinical Commissioning Group to cover Guildford, Haslemere and Horsley. Amanda looked back over her long career in nursing and described some of the changes over the years. Photographs of Amanda as a young nurse (she qualified as an SRN in 1981) reminded us of how nurses used to look - with neat blue uniform dresses, perky caps, frilly sleeve cuffs and stiff white aprons! We enjoyed the stories of fierce matrons, the rules of bed making with “hospital corners” and the acquired technique of thermometer-shaking.

Amanda outlined her experience in different branches of nursing, her “mum” break, and then her return to nursing, training to work as a specialist in the Community. She made clear that the role of the specialist nurse was vital in the management of Parkinson’s as she can help and advise carers when small changes occur. Parkinson’s is a disease that progresses slowly, so it is very important to report any sudden new developments -e.g. more rigidity, increased tremor. These could be symptoms of an underlying problem - possibly a urinary infection. It made us all appreciate the importance of maintaining contact with a PD nurse when living with Parkinson’s. *Thank you Amanda!*

Margaret Westwood