

Chairs Report for November 2023 AGM

We have had another busy year in Stockport ME Group.. We have held:

- Monthly Friday meetings with a range of speakers and activities
- Most months we have held a Zoom social
- Regular face-to-face social meetings
- A series of Mindfulness sessions with Michael Henshall on Zoom
- A series of adapted yoga sessions on Zoom
- Special one off sessions on LDN and Rest & Relaxation

In addition, we have engaged with the Greater Manchester Integrated Care Partnership (GMICP) in their work on reviewing ME/CFS services across Greater Manchester. As part of this review, in collaboration with Bury & Bolton ME/CFS and Fibromyalgia Support group, we facilitated online sessions where patients could provide feedback on their experiences. We have also been involved in many meetings and given a written submission lobbying for necessary changes on ME/CFS provision across Greater Manchester.

We have also been actively involved in running our collaborative research project on Heart Rate Monitoring with Physios for ME and The Workwell Foundation which finished collecting data in May 2023 and this is now in the process of being collated, written up and published. We are hoping to have a session feeding back these findings to our group in 2024.

To ensure that we can continue with everything we are currently doing with the various meetings and extra sessions, our regular newsletter publication, helpline, campaigning and a lot of individual member support we could do with a lot more help from volunteers. We are pleased to welcome Alanna this year to the committee, but we could still do with more help, particularly as we are trying to hold regular face-to-face and online meetings and also as several role holders have asked for replacements to be found for them..

We are delighted at the attendance of our events this year. In the past, we have resisted trying new activities or securing funding for events because they were often insufficiently attended but all the extra activities we held this year were really well attended and we are only not running more due to volunteer capacity issues.

We were very pleased to receive two lots of funding from Forever Manchester this year which enabled us to offer events at no or low charge to members. We are very aware how financially hard times are at the moment which is also why we have not increased our membership fees despite costs going up significantly. We have also secured some funding from Stockport Town of Culture and submitted an application on invitation for more funding through GMCVO.

We are very pleased to welcome Alanna this year to the committee but we do need more help. This is particularly important because several committee members, who currently hold key roles, wish to step down in the near future and they have asked that we actively look for people to replace them. In addition, we want to hold more consistent face to face meetings and this will only be possible if we have more volunteers to help.

We are looking forward to next year with lots more events and activities planned.