

Kidderminster & Worcestershire Prostate Cancer Support Group



PSA Testing returns to County
June 8th. in Kidderminster – tell your friends

SUPPORTER

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EDITORIAL



Well, what a start to the year! By the beginning of May (when I'm writing this) the support group had organised four events in four different locations across the county, and all have been great successes. How do we measure success? Firstly, by the numbers attending. Secondly, by attracting to the events non-members who soon become new members. And thirdly, by seeking feedback to judge how beneficial the events have been for those participating.

We are hugely grateful to WAHT consultant urological surgeon, Paul Rajjayabun, for his excellent explanation of robotically assisted surgery now available at the Alexandra Hospital in Redditch to a packed Wychavon Civic Centre in March and to the newly-elected co-Chair of Tackle, Aidan Adkins, for his equally well-attended talk at the Harriers Social Club in Kidderminster. In addition, though, it was great to see so many new faces and new organisers at the Coffee & Chat mornings, which were held in Evesham and Tenbury Wells, and so much good conversation taking place. All four events are described in more detail on pages 5-7.

Our attention now turns to the PSA testing events which KWPCSG are underwriting, so both events are free for participants. PSA testing is still a contentious issue, no more so than as shown by the different stances PCUK and Tackle have taken towards this subject, but careful reconsideration is now happening (see pages 13-15). Like many other PCSGs, we have resumed testing after a break of several years and we wish to monitor the outcomes of both the Kidderminster event in June and the Pershore one in September before committing to future testing events. Our main feature will, hopefully, encourage you to pass on details of these important events to male friends and family over the age of 50.

Back in March we announced our determination to carry on the NHS-PCUK Missing Men campaign at a local level. We've decided to set ourselves a couple of targets. First, we are aiming to attract what would be a record 50 new members to our support group in 2023, and second, we are hoping at least 50 pubs in the county will display our Missing Men mini poster in the gents' loos. If you know of pubs you could approach, just contact me (see below) and we'll get the laminated poster(s) to you. This, then, is the essence of our 50 / 50 targets which we'll update in the September and December magazines.

Finally, I was due to complete this editorial with a few words about Trevor Ching, who joined KWPCSG in 2020. I soon realised a few words would not do justice to Trevor's story, so please turn to page 9 to an article which should inspire us all.

Peter Corbishley / editor@kwpcsg.co.uk / Tel. 07876 556466

FREE PSA TESTING IN KIDDERMINSTER

Thursday, June 8th. (16.00-20.00)

Kidderminster Harriers Social Club, DY10 1NB

For more details turn to page 13

FUTURE EVENTS



KWPCSG'S FIRST PSA TESTING EVENT SINCE 2016



Kidderminster Harriers Social Club

As you can read in more detail on page 12, KWPCSG is organising and sponsoring its first PSA testing event in the county since 2016 on Thursday, June 8th. at the Kidderminster Harriers Social Club (DY10 1NB). If you know of anyone over 50 who could benefit from a free PSA test, please urge them to book a slot on www.mypsatests.org.uk

DR. SIMON MURPHY GUEST SPEAKER AT PERSHORE

We are pleased to welcome **Dr. Simon Murphy** to Pershore on **Wednesday, June 14th. (doors open at 6.30 for a 7.00 start)**. Simon is a non-executive director on the board of the Worcestershire Acute Hospitals Trust (WAHT), having lived in the county for over 35 years. His colourful career includes high profile leadership and management roles across the NHS as well as being a **former Member of the European Parliament**. He has a PhD in Northern Irish politics and was previously on the board of the Worcestershire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) and Chief Executive of Worcester Community Trust. We are promised not only an insight into the multiple issues facing the Trust but also into his experience with charitable organisations.



Simon Murphy

MALVERN COFFEE & CHAT

The Coffee & Chat roadshow returns to Malvern on **Friday, June 23rd. (10.30-12.00)**. Once again, **The Cube on Albert Road North (WR14 2YF / 10.30-12.00)** is the venue and all members, partners and non-members are invited to a free coffee and cake. Ample free parking is available immediately behind the centre or on-road. We hope there will be a great turn-out, including people on the Herefordshire side of the hills, so do spread the word.

POLICE PRESENCE AT KIDDERMINSTER EVENT



Neil Austin

True, but in the form of our guest speaker, **Neil Austin**, who lives in Worcester and retired in 2022 as a **Detective Superintendent in the West Mercia Police Force**. Neil recently became a member of KWPCSG and is keen to tell us about his journey as an asymptomatic man with prostate cancer. His reactions at the time and his struggle in coming to terms with his condition will resonate with many members. Read more about Neil on pages 16-17 of this magazine, then come along to hear him speak at the **Kidderminster Harriers Social Club on Monday, July 17th. (doors open at 7.00 for a 7.30 start)**.

MARY'S CORNER



I was delighted to watch the **Coronation** yesterday of Charles III and his Queen Camilla and wish them well for the future. An event like this with all the pomp and ceremony is so uplifting for our country and is watched throughout the world. I have friends in the USA who love our royalty and will get up in the middle of their night to watch every bit of this wonderful and unique ceremony, as well as my best nursing colleague at Kidderminster, Joyce Summers, who now lives in Philadelphia.

I vaguely remember a street party when I was about 4 years 6 months old when Elizabeth II's coronation was held. We did not have a television then, but all the street gathered together to celebrate.

We had a good, well-attended meeting at our new venue, the Kidderminster Harriers Social Club, on Monday 17th April, with **Aidan Adkins** as our Speaker. He talked very openly about his own journey with prostate cancer whose recurrence meant that he had to have more treatments. His role as the Chairman of the Solihull PCSG and as Co-Chair and Trustee of Tackle ensures that he is very knowledgeable about treatments that are now available. I am pleased to learn about the advancement in treatments for men with advanced prostate cancer. Certainly 25 years ago, when I became a Clinical Nurse Specialist, there was little that could be offered. It is good for our new members to learn how research has advanced treatment for men with recurrent disease.

We had lots of new faces at this meeting, and **Hilary Brothwell** helped by making sure that they all received membership forms and encouraged them to talk to myself or join other members at the tables.

I have arranged for Aidan to run a **two-day Buddy course** for any men in the group who are, or would like to be, a Buddy to new members. Details can be found on **page 11**, but please contact me if you wish to join this class it is a limited number on this course.

We are also running a week later at the same venue, putting on a course for **Support Contacts** for one day, run by myself and Peter Corbishley. More information is again to be found on **page 11**. Please let me know if you would like to volunteer to become a support contact.

I am sorry to have to report that **Peter Spencer** passed away on the 2nd May following a long illness. Peter was the first KWPCSG member who had robotic surgery at Cheltenham Hospital, and he was happy to discuss his experience with any other men who would like robotic surgery and became a Buddy. He helped a lot of members of our group and worked hard on the Committee to help us advance our work throughout the county.

Mary Symons

FREE PSA TESTING IN KIDDERMINSTER
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For more details turn to page 13



RECENT EVENTS

EVESHAM C&C LAUNCHES 2023 PROGRAMME

All geared up for our first Coffee & Chat in Evesham on Thursday, March 9th., but I open the curtains and it's snowing. What's more, snow has settled overnight and calls come in from the north of the county, saying how much worse it is there and they've decided not to risk a journey down to Evesham. Not the ideal start.

Our local volunteers, Kevin Gillespie and Adrian Hodges, had, however, covered the area with our mini posters, and soon the numbers reached a very respectable 24, including 4 new members. Fuelled by Lawrance's cakes, those attending interacted with each other so well that the 90 minutes flew by, with no one in a hurry to leave.



John Voyce, Mike Rochelle and Trevor Strain (all from Worcester)

Gordon Kingston, who organised the event on behalf of the South Worcestershire PCSG, arranged for 3 of the new members to contest the honour of becoming the KWPCSG's 1000th. member. A few flips of a coin later and step forward Mike Rochelle from Worcester (see page 8).

COFFEE & CHAT, FOUNTAIN INN, TENBURY WELLS



Lots of interaction at the tables

The first Tenbury Wells Coffee & Chat was a great success, and a good time was had by all. There was a smashing turn-out of 29 people, including five partners of men living with prostate cancer.

The coffee, tea and cakes went down a treat, although we did miss Mark Howard who was unable to make it, as he usually helps to Hoover up a lot of the left-over cakes!

Attending were people from as far afield as Rugby, Worcester, Redditch, Bromsgrove, Kidderminster and so on, and we are exceedingly grateful to all who supported the event. It was wonderful to see so many people over at Tenbury Wells, as we usually have to travel to events – so what a treat for us!

We are delighted to say that we gained four new members, which is fabulous news, and we hope that they will now increase support from this lovely group.

It was so moving, as we looked around the room and listened to the chatter, to observe that everyone was engaging in conversation, and all looked relaxed and happy. It was good, too, to hear conversations about holidays, family and all manner of topics unrelated to the theme.

A hearty thank you to Mary and committee members who supported the day and, again, to everyone who was involved in a most uplifting morning.

Andrea and Donovan Ferns



RECENT EVENTS

ROBOTIC SURGERY EXPLAINED AT PACKED PERSHORE EVENT



Paul Rajjyabun

WAHT Consultant Urological Surgeon, Paul Rajjyabun, treated a packed Wychavon Civic Centre to an update on the robotic assisted surgery (RAS) facility at the Alexander Hospital in Redditch in March. He outlined the long process of acquiring the Da Vinci robot and its successful launch in October.

An estimated record 70-plus attendees listened intently to Dr. Rajjyabun's hour-long talk, supported by slides and videos. He explained that several years ago the urology team conducted about 220 radical prostatectomies (removal of prostate gland by open surgery) each year. As the nearby centres of Wolverhampton, Coventry and Cheltenham all offer RAS, this number declined to under 100 for their treatment.

This in turn threatened the very existence of the urology department and had a huge impact on the department's ability to recruit new staff. As readers will know, the 10 years of indecision came to an end in 2022 when contracts were signed for the trust to rent a machine. Major improvements to the theatre over the summer lead to the first RAS prostate removal in early October.

Since the first case, the time required for the operation has reduced from 6 hours to 3½ hours. In most cases patients spend only one night in hospital and general recovery time is far shorter than after open surgery. There will, however, still be a need in certain cases to opt for the radical surgery rather than the RAS.

There were, however, some stark warnings. Nationally, the numbers of men diagnosed with prostate cancer is set to rocket from the present 52,000 per annum to a predicted 85,000 by 2038. The main reasons driving the increase are that men are living longer and are more active in old age, the population is increasing significantly year on year and awareness and diagnosis is improving. Being able to cope with these increases over a relatively short period is a daunting task.

In Worcestershire annual PC diagnosis rate is still well below the 740 per annum in the pre-Covid years but steadily increasing. In 2020 the number dropped to 474 and fell to just 424 in 2021 (both years being hugely affected by much reduced access to GPs, particularly in lockdown). There was some improvement in 2022 (to 510), but, taken together, it means that it is highly likely there are at least 800 people with PC from those years who are at serious risk of being diagnosed when the cancer has already progressed beyond the prostate. This underlined the importance of the support group's Missing Men campaign. It really will save lives.

After several years like no others in the NHS it was so refreshing to find one of our own surgeons so upbeat about the much improved service in the county for those diagnosed with PC. He praised both the support group for its efforts and also medical practices across the county where he felt that awareness was far better than in other parts of the country. Such a positive assessment was well received by an appreciative audience.

Peter Corbishley

(not present on the night but having watched the talk on YouTube via www.kwpcsg.co.uk)



RECENT EVENTS

TACKLE CHAIR AIDAN ADKINS AT KIDDERMINSTER

We were given a real treat when the newly elected Co-Chair of Tackle, Aidan Adkins, visited Kidderminster on April 17th and delivered a “tour de force” about his own journey and how Tackle can help us all.



Our first event at the Harriers Social Club

His own PC journey started whilst still globe-trotting and working for GKN. A PSA of 27 led to a series of scans - here and in Germany - androgen deprivation therapy treatments, radiotherapy via SABR (stereotactic ablative body radiotherapy), more scans at the QE Birmingham, chemotherapy and ADT again! His good news story, though, was that there are still at least 3 more treatments in the pipeline.

His can-do attitude is an example to us all. He attended various courses, including one behind the CHESTNUT project. Aidan explained this acronym which includes – Contenance, Exercise, Sex & Intimacy, Testing, Nutrition, Usefulness and, finally, Talking to someone.

Whilst this list seems daunting, Aidan’s delivery made us think about what we might do positively. We shall return to these “Chestnuts” with a further article in the future.

Aidan did mention the Michael Mosley radio series, “Just One Thing,” to get us started and exemplified standing on one leg to improve balance – whilst cleaning our teeth! Have you tried it? It really does work. It’s worth a follow up to the radio series on Podcasts, or Radio 4 Sounds. But, if you cannot wait for the Chestnut article, look at our own website (www.kwpcsg.co.uk).

Gordon Kingston



Guest speaker Aidan Adkins with his presentation



Gordon Kingston, who introduced the speaker



MEMBERS



FUTURE OF ACTIVE ALWAYS COFFEE MORNINGS SECURED



Left to right: Di Fox, Lucy Brown, Mark Howard, Ben Furlow

Staying as active as possible is incredibly important for patients undergoing cancer treatment, which is why Worcestershire Acute Hospitals Charity (WAHC) were thankful to **Mark Howard**, a current patient of Worcestershire Acute Hospitals NHS Trust's Oncology Service, for his generous donation in support of Active Always Coffee Mornings.

Throughout his treatment, Mark has benefited from the **Active Always Coffee Mornings**, and he wanted to ensure that other patients will be able to benefit from them as well.

The coffee mornings are hosted by **Di Fox at Worcester Sports Ground in Claines** every Tuesday from 10:30am to 12 noon. They are also supported by Ben Furlow, Macmillan Living With and Beyond Cancer Project Manager, who works to support cancer patients at Worcestershire Acute Hospitals NHS Trust.

Nicky Langford, Community Fundraising Officer for WAHC, said: "We were pleased to accept Mark's generous donation, which enables us to support great initiatives like Active Always Coffee mornings which do such great work to support patients."

Lucy Brown (Charity Engagement Officer, WAHC)

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MEMBERS



GREETINGS FROM CORNWALL



Trevor Ching

I have kept in touch with a former KWPCSG member, **Trevor Ching (68)**. As he was one of my support group members, I remember contacting him for the first time in November 2020. He told me all about his family (2 sons and 5 grandchildren)

but was just due to start a course of chemotherapy covering the next 18 weeks, having recorded a PSA level of 176.

We next spoke in March 2021, and he was not at all well. In addition to the post-chemo physical problems, there were the mental issues of not being able to see his family during lockdown. A month later, Trevor phoned me in a bad state, having received no response from the CNS nurses when seeking urgent support with catheter problems. I suggested he contacted Mary, which he did, and a week later he sounded much better.

Readers may remember references to Trevor in our June 2021 magazine when his daughter-in-law, Jessica, who lives in Evesham, raised over £ 500 for PCUK with a 'Walk to Madrid' (1170 'lockdown miles' which did not involve leaving the area).

For the previous 8 years Trevor had been working for Amcor in Ledbury. He retired in April 2021 and he and his wife, Chrissy, who used to be a lecturer at Birmingham Botanical Gardens, decided to realise **their dream of moving to Cornwall** as soon as possible. Not easy, given the huge spike in numbers of people from all over the country looking for property in Cornwall to 'work from home'. But all went well, they found the house they were looking for in Illogan, **a couple of miles inland from Portreath**, and by the summer

they had sold their home in Welland and were on their way to Cornwall.

Several weeks ago, Trevor contacted me, seeking advice regarding PCSGs in Cornwall. He sounded so happy, telling me about his new-found friends all living very close by who walk together along to the beach every Sunday and manage at least one round of golf each week. Now he wanted to give back, to see what he could contribute to PC support in his adopted county.

Two months on in early May, I am linked in to the monthly Tackle Support Group Leaders Zoom meeting. Among the 30-plus participants from all over the country there is Trevor, together with the retiring Chair of the Cornwall PCSG. A quick exchange of emails after the meeting elicits the information that **Trevor is putting his name forward at his group's AGM in June to become the treasurer of the Cornwall group.**

I'm sure those who know Trevor will wish him and Chrissy many years of happiness in their favourite part of the UK and salute them for their determination to go ahead with such a move at a time when Trevor was quite poorly, carrying it through and thriving in their new environment - so much so that Trevor is now keen to help others with prostate cancer.

Peter Corbishley (with permission from Trevor to refer to confidential phone conversations between him and me as a KWPCSG Support Contact)



Trevor and Chrissy on their favourite Portreath Beach



MISSING MEN

PROSTATE AWARENESS



In our March magazine we launched our Missing Men campaign. 'Launched' is probably the wrong word, as we just embraced the idea thanks to the success nationally of the NHS-PCUK initiative in 2022 and simply wanted to apply it at a local level. In other words, don't expect a load of marketing gismos such as balloons, stickers, fridge magnets, etc. Nor will you be confronted by fundraisers jangling collection boxes at you.

Getting the word out beyond our own members is vital. That is why all members will not only receive a printed copy of the Supporter magazine on or before June 1st. but also **an email with an electronic version of the magazine attached**. Why both? The hope is that most of you will download the magazine each time we send it so that you can add it to emails to others, particularly to someone you've heard has recently been diagnosed with PC.

One modest way we are looking to expand our visibility is to persuade 50 landlords / landladies to display one of our A5 laminated posters in the gents' loos. We rolled up a couple of weeks ago at the Galton Arms in Himbleton at the insistence of Paul Rajjayabun (little persuasion was needed) to talk to **Jane and Joe Rudge**, who run the delightful country pub and who are keen to promote our cause. Just 49 more are now required, but we need you to contact us (Gordon Kingston on 01386 462253 or Peter Corbishley on 01386 554650) after getting the agreement of your local pub manager or owner.

OBITUARY

PETER SPENCER: COMMITTEE MEMBER AND COMMITTED VOLUNTEER



Peter Spencer

It was with great sadness that we learnt in early May of the death of one of our committee members, Peter Spencer.

Peter was an engineer and travelled the world working in various countries, such as Finland, South Africa and Oman. After his retirement he volunteered to become a guide at Morgan Cars in Malvern. Indeed, he was busy organising an event for our members at Morgan when Covid struck and everything was put on hold.

He had two sons – Craig, who lives in Cardiff, and Andrew, who lives in Norwich.

He also leaves two grandchildren, Eve and Alex.

He was dedicated to the work that the Kidderminster & Worcestershire Prostate Cancer Support Group has done throughout the county and volunteered to become a Buddy to men who were contemplating Robotic Surgery. His help and support helped many new members through their treatment and recovery and he became a committee member to help others members, too.

Our memories of Peter are of a positive, wonderful and reliable man who would speak with great passion about his volunteering role at Morgan, his admiration for the medical staff at Cheltenham, his wish to help our members as a Buddy and his love for his family. We will miss him.

Mary Symons

GREAT OPPORTUNITY TO VOLUNTEER

In her column on page 4 our Chair, Mary Symons, wrote about the Coronation on May 6th. You may all recall that the following Monday was chosen by the King to be a day focused on offering one's services free of charge to helping charities, voluntary organisations, community projects, neighbours in need, individuals who just need someone to chat to from time to time the list is endless.

We are sure that many of you give freely of your time in supporting friends, families and other organisations. At KWPCSG we are fortunate that we have many people volunteering to keep our charity going and raise the awareness levels of PC in the county. Where would we be without our fundraisers, the marketing team responsible for the website, media adverts, posters, brochures, flyers and the Supporter magazine, the Shed team which has developed our site at Leapgate, our treasurer ensuring money is collected and well spent, those responsible for membership data, giving talks to local clubs and societies or, more recently, factories in the county, and those who have stepped forward to run our Coffee & Chat events?

Let's not forget, however, our primary aim which is to support our members, which many of us do either as **Buddies or Support Contacts**. Buddies are assigned to new members who wish to be linked with someone in our group with a similar PC prognosis. Our 20-plus Support Contacts are assigned between 12-18 members whom they are asked to contact 2-3 times a year, to check how they are and to react if further support is required.

We are extremely fortunate in acquiring the services of the **newly-appointed Co-Chair of Tackle, Aidan Adkins**, to run our **2-day Buddying course**. This is an area Aidan has concentrated on in recent years and I am certain everyone who signs up for the training will benefit hugely from the experience. The Support Contacts training will be a one-day event run in-house by **Mary Symons** and **Peter Corbishley**.

If you'd like to be a Buddy or Support Contact, training sessions are available this month. The details are in the advert (below). If you would like to find out more about Buddying, contact Mary Symons on 01299 823166 or mandmsymons@talktalk.net. Those interested in becoming a Support Contact should contact Mary, Derek Scully (01886 833236 / derekscully@btinternet.com) or Peter Corbishley (01386 554650 / petecorbishley@gmail.com)

KWPCSG MEMBERS

BUDDY TRAINING DAYS

VENUE: THE SWAN AT WHITTINGTON, WORCESTER (M5, EXIT 7 / WR5 2RL

DATES: WED. 21st. and THURS. 22nd. JUNE (10.00-16.00)

SUPPORT CONTACTS TRAINING DAY

VENUE: THE SWAN AT WHITTINGTON, WORCESTER (M5, EXIT 7 / WR5 2RL)

DATES: TUES. 27th. JUNE (10.00-16.00)

More details available in the article above

THE NEW KID ON THE COMMITTEE

I'm Dan. I'm 25, from Bewdley and run a web development business (specialising in helping healthcare businesses). I've just joined the KWPCSG committee to use technology to enhance how we support members.

When Peter requested a few images for the magazine, the only ones I could find involved guitars, cars and car journalists. They sum up my life outside of work quite well. I can talk all day about locking differentials, vintage Marshalls and B58 engines.

2016 was the year that Richard Langley approached me to build a website for KWPCSG. I remember it well - KWPCSG were my first official customer, and kwpcsg.co.uk was the first website I built from scratch. I still recall the late nights, wondering what mess I'd got myself into (dealing with acronyms such as AWS, DNS, A-records, etc...). Not to mention PSA, hormone therapy and robotic surgery!

I became self-employed just before starting university (where I left the quiet town of Bewdley) and moved to the lively town of Guildford (where pints cost over £5 back in 2016!). I studied Computer Science and went on to work in Slough for a few years (have you seen 'The Office', with Ricky Gervais?).



Dan playing guitar at a blues jam night



Dan Cook with motoring journalist, Chris Harris

Armed with an interest in web development, data security and customer support, I left my job in 2021 to set up WebHQ Ltd. Once again, KWPCSG were one of my first customers - we rebuilt the website to better support missing men following the pandemic. I'm really pleased to hear that the new website has helped lead to the busiest year for KWPCSG gaining new members.

Fast-forward to 2023 and I'm now building an anonymous survey system so we can better understand the current state of prostate cancer diagnosis and treatment across Worcestershire. It's my goal to make these surveys as easy to fill out as possible, as I know the power of gathering data from everybody's experience.

I'm keen to hear more about your experiences with booking PSA tests. In fact, that's what the first survey will dig into. If you're at the June or July meetings, I'll make sure you get the chance to have your say about the current state of PSA testing!

Dan Cook

PSA TESTING RETURNS TO THE COUNTY

We have to go back to 2016 to find the last time our support group organised a PSA testing event in the county. In the intervening years, debate both here in Worcestershire and nationally about the validity and effectiveness of such screening has been divided. The stances taken by PCUK and Tackle have in those years been very different.

'Few subjects polarise doctors as much as prostate specific antigen (PSA) testing for prostate cancer'. This is how **Dr. Mark Porter**, who writes regularly about health matters in The Times, began a recent article. He cites some urologists who are passionate about testing, while others consider the tests to be flawed. He places himself somewhere in the middle, a position which PCUK seems now to be moving towards (see pages 14-15).

KWPCSG has decided to resume testing this year. Times have changed, though, and there will no longer be queues of men snaking round Kidderminster Town

Hall waiting to be tested. Instead, anyone wishing to be tested free of charge must go on to the **Graham Fulford Trust** website: www.mypsatestests.org.uk and follow the guidelines. You can sign up for the Kidderminster event which will be held on **Thursday, June 8th. (16.00-20.00) at the Harriers Social Club, Hoo Lane, Kidderminster (DY10 1NB)**. It is, however, primarily not for our members but for asymptomatic people they know who could benefit from being tested.

This means we need most of you to approach someone aged 50 or above, **particularly someone of African-Caribbean origin where the risk levels are far greater than for others**. There is only a week between our members receiving the magazine and the Kidderminster testing date, so please don't delay and let us see all 150 slots taken up by men in the county and beyond. Do remember that your support group is funding this event which will undoubtedly save lives, so please persuade friends and family to sign up.

WHAT IS PSA?

- PSA is a protein produced by the prostate gland and raised levels in the blood may suggest problems ranging from infection to age-related enlargement to cancer.
- PSA is not an accurate screening tool. Three quarters of men with a raised PSA do not have cancer, and one in seven men who do will have a normal PSA.
- There is no national PSA-based screening programme, but men over 50 can request a test from their GP: nhs.uk/conditions/prostate-cancer/psa-testing
- These groups are at higher risk of developing prostate cancer: men who have had a father or brother with the disease; black men; and those with a strong family history of ovarian or breast cancer (a shared gene variation – BRCA1 and 2 – can predispose to all three)



IS THE UK READY FOR PROSTATE CANCER SCREENING?

DECISIONS ON THE SAFETY OF TESTING ALL MEN AT RISK ARE A QUESTION OF BALANCING THE BENEFITS WITH POTENTIAL HARMS. DR MATTHEW HOBBS SHOWS HOW RECENT RESEARCH MAY MEAN THAT THE SEESAW IS TIPPING IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION.

The UK may finally be in a position to roll out a screening programme for prostate cancer, thanks to the adoption of new techniques funded by you.

Widespread screening can reduce deaths from prostate cancer by 20 per cent, but a national rollout has been impossible while the benefits have been outweighed by the drawbacks.

Our research shows these new techniques are helping to tip the balance in its favour.

Currently, the PSA blood test, the first step towards a diagnosis, isn't accurate enough to tell for certain if a man has prostate cancer or not. Further tests, including a biopsy, are needed to confirm whether they do have the disease.

This means some men will have a biopsy who ultimately do not have cancer, running the risk of infection and pain from the procedure. Other men may be told they have the disease, and put onto harsh treatments, even though their cancer is unlikely to harm them.

However, our research shows that recent improvements can prevent tens of thousands of men each year from experiencing these harms.



10,000 MEN A YEAR ARE BEING DIAGNOSED TOO LATE TO BE CURED.

The news comes after we showed that 10,000 men a year are being diagnosed too late to be cured, highlighting the importance of introducing a screening programme that could save thousands of lives.

Our grateful thanks to Prostate Cancer UK for allowing us to use this article from their Spring 2023 Insights Magazine

This article originally appeared on Prostate Cancer UK's website
<https://prostatecanceruk.org/about-us/news-and-views/2023/02/our-new-research-shows-the-uk-may-finally-be-ready-for-prostate-cancer-screening>

In February, the UK's National Screening Committee confirmed it would review the possibility of a screening programme for all men over 50, as well as for men over 45 who are Black or men who have a first-degree relative with prostate, breast or ovarian cancer – two groups who are at highest risk. We welcome these decisions, and we are urging the committee to consider all the latest evidence from the UK and Europe which points towards an ever-stronger case for screening.

MORE ACCURATE MRI SCANS AND SAFER BIOPSIES PREVENTING HARM

Before 2019, men with a high level of PSA in their blood were sent straight for a biopsy, which could cause pain and bleeding, and came with a risk of serious infection. These biopsies could also sometimes miss the cancer, leading to repeated biopsies with further risks of infection and uncomfortable side-effects.

We helped to fund research that showed having mpMRI scans beforehand could safely rule out many of these biopsies as unnecessary, as well as improving the accuracy of those that were needed, making them more likely to detect the cancer the first time. We also worked closely with the NHS to make sure the innovative technique was rolled out across the country. The introduction of mpMRI has resulted in a 64 per cent decrease in unnecessary biopsies.

Our findings come from an analysis of several clinical trials, current clinical practice, and real-world data from 16 NHS trusts in London and South-West England. We compared this information to a screening trial from before these newer scans and biopsies were introduced, and found that, on average, 67 per cent fewer men experienced harm during the diagnostic process.

For every 10,000 PSA blood tests carried out, this means 902 fewer men harmed – equivalent to tens of thousands of men across the country each year.

We also supported several hospitals to transition to transperineal biopsies, where the needle is inserted into the perineum rather than the rectum, giving a lower risk of infection. The increased use of these biopsies means just five men in every 10,000 sent for a PSA blood test (or 0.05 percent) are now at risk of sepsis.

WORKING TOWARDS A WORLD WHERE EVERY MAN AT RISK GETS REGULAR, SAFE AND ACCURATE TESTS

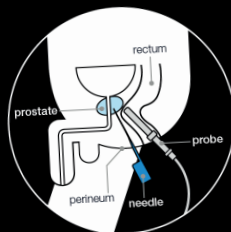
This will only be the first step in stopping prostate cancer being a killer. We know that even this modern pathway needs to be improved, and we're committed to funding the research needed to make that happen, so we can save as many lives as possible. ■

Using mpMRI means some men without cancer can safely avoid a biopsy.



64%
FEWER
UNNECESSARY
BIOPSIES

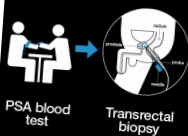
Taking prostate samples via the perineum reduces the risk of sepsis.



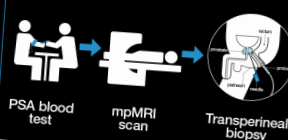
55%
FEWER
CASES OF
SEPSIS

New MRI scans and safer biopsies reduce harm and could make screening a reality.

Before 2019:



TODAY:



A regular gift from you will help get us closer to a world where every man at risk gets safe and accurate tests. Help us diagnose prostate cancer early to save lives.

prostatecanceruk.org/donate



BE PROACTIVE AND GET TESTED

Retired West Mercia Police detective urges others to get tested



Neil Austin

Neil Austin has spent most of his life living in St. John's, Worcester. He was a pupil at the Royal Grammar School in Worcester before starting a Sports and Recreation degree at what is now the University of Staffordshire. Having discontinued the course, he returned to Worcester and worked in various shoe shops. He married Louise and they had two children before he decided to join the police force at the age of 27.

The former detective superintendent was told he had prostate cancer in July 2021, having experienced no symptoms.

"A colleague of mine had been diagnosed previously and he was very open about it, by way of raising awareness of prostate cancer and actively encouraging others who were over 50 to get tested too. Typically, like most men, I brushed it to one side and didn't get tested - after all, I was showing no symptoms," said Neil, who admits it was not until he bumped into the colleague again, that he finally visited his doctor for a PSA test.

Neil continued: "My PSA was slightly raised but it wasn't concerning, however, over the next year, I proactively returned to the doctor on a couple of occasions and found my PSA reading was fluctuating. At my last appointment, I had a new doctor, who was concerned about my readings and referred me to a consultant."

Following an internal examination - which showed Neil's prostate to be smooth but slightly enlarged - he was sent for an MRI scan which showed areas of concern and led to a biopsy.

"I remember I was going on holiday at the time and didn't want to worry, so I called the nurse for my results. She wouldn't tell me over the phone, but I could just tell from her voice that I had cancer," Neil explained.

"Me and my wife went in to see her and she confirmed I had prostate cancer. I was devastated. I think as soon as the 'C word' is mentioned, you feel like your life is falling apart, you can't help but think about the small percentage of people who don't survive.

It was explained there were three options: a radical prostatectomy (surgery to remove the entire prostate gland), radiotherapy or robotics prostatectomy (less invasive surgery and removal of the prostate).



Neil and his wife, Louise

"I was advised that a radical prostatectomy was the best option for me," said Neil, who explained that the wait to get seen by a consultant for the operation following diagnosis was extremely long, and he just wanted the cancer out, fearing it would spread.

"Some of the side effects of prostate cancer treatment are that you might be incontinent and may not get an erection anymore." He turned to a doctor in Solihull, who specialises in saving these functions," added Neil, who underwent surgery in February 2022.

Following the operation Neil experienced several serious complications during recovery, particularly stomach pains and urine leaking into his abdomen, although he said those have almost all sorted themselves out now. "My PSA is very low, which is really good," he said, adding: "My PSA levels are being monitored for the next couple of years.



Neil, daughter and grandchildren

"Having cancer does change you. I thought I was quite strong mentally, but this has impacted me so much more than I ever thought it would have. I'm definitely not as confident as I was. I wouldn't say I have accepted what's happened yet, but I'm getting there."

At first, Neil said he felt 'embarrassed' by the diagnosis, admitting that he only opened up to his close family and friends. "It was only when I retired, during my retirement speech, that I decided to tell my colleagues," explained Neil, who retired in 2021, having spent 30 years in the Force.

Neil, now a 58-year-old father of four and grandfather of six, is currently working 3 days a week, teaching private hire taxi drivers about the law, safeguarding and disability, for Wolverhampton Council. He concluded, "I realised I have a responsibility to speak out about my experience and help others. Because the bottom line is, if you choose to ignore it, you could be dead.

"Since diagnosis, it has amazed me how many men I know socially and through my time in the police have also been diagnosed with prostate cancer. One particular individual provided me with tremendous support and shared his experiences which enabled me to make better-informed decisions and know what to expect.

"I am pleased to say a number of friends and colleagues have had PSA tests since my diagnosis. Thankfully, most have been clear but at least two have since been diagnosed with early stages of prostate cancer and are undergoing treatment. Neither had any symptoms.

"If you're 45 and over, please be proactive and get tested, it's as simple as that. That test could save your life.

"And remember, it's good to talk - let's continue to stop the stigma surrounding prostate cancer."

Neil is our main speaker on Monday, July 17th. at the Kidderminster Harriers Social Club.



I NEVER SAW THAT COMING!

GETTING BACK TO NORMAL

It may seem strange to hear from an individual that is well into his 3 to 5 years - but I have enjoyed the last 18 months. Even ignoring some health scares, one including putting a camera where adults really should not put cameras. The pandemic was a challenge, to find myself with a life-limiting illness and advised to become a hermit was not what I expected when I got my prognosis in 2019. Once the country opened again, I dusted off my suitcase, relocated my Senior Railcard and was off on my travels.



Mark in Glasgow

I recently travelled to Glasgow to see the Scottish Model Railway Show. After the show I visited the Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum where they have a lunchtime organ recital, I sat there in the spectacular entrance lobby, drinking my coffee and enjoying a pleasant sandwich in the cafe as the organist played the finale from Saint-Saens Symphony No. 3. The audience seemed entranced, savouring every moment.

On the Sunday I went to the church service in Glasgow Cathedral. I had switched my telephone to mute, but, alas, I had not realised that an alarm setting would override the mute,

so at 12:00 the phone decides to go off to remind me to take pain medication to control my sciatica. Everybody turned and looked at me. Here comes the bluff. I reached into my rucksack and took out my medication and a bottle of water. Taking the tablets and water in an exaggerated display seemed to satisfy the congregation, and the service carried on without further interruption.

After the service I walked up to the top of the Necropolis. Looking back from the Necropolis you see the Glasgow Royal Infirmary to the side of the cathedral, I have a rather dark sense of humour and thought how clever the Victorian and Edwardian planners were.

I spent a day in London recently, visiting Greenwich, home of the Old Royal Naval College, Cutty Sark, National Maritime Museum and Royal Observatory. It was a gloriously bright but chilly day. I stood on the deck of Cutty Sark and watched the other tourists, some obviously way outside their comfort zone as they climbed the rigging and abseiled down again. It was obvious some were not enjoying their day trip!

For me the abiding memory of the day was the trip from Canary Wharf to Paddington on one of the new Elizabeth line trains. The train was packed, standing room only. A young woman kindly offered me her seat. Having spent the day on my feet, I accepted the gracious offer and thanked her. Whether I was looking haggard or tired I do not know, but the seat was appreciated!



On the deck of the Cutty Sark in Greenwich

At times I have not been the most co-operative of patients. When things go wrong, I tend to overreact and need time to get myself together. My medical team has looked after me, but it has taken a while for me to let go and just follow their advice. Since January 2022 my PSA has been increasing. It's now up to 27 (last blood test on April 19th.), on average going up 2-3 every month but beginning to flatline more recently. Tumours (lymph nodes) are now over 5 cm. in length. It is difficult being aware that something rather unpleasant is growing inside me. Chemotherapy will hopefully shrink the tumours, but once I have had chemo again, under current guidelines there is nothing else in the cupboard. Delaying chemo till I become symptomatic is the sensible thing to do.

I was unsure whether to attend the March KWPCSG meeting at the Civic Centre in Pershore. The subject was the new surgical robot at the Alexandra Hospital. As I was metastatic at diagnosis, my options were limited. A prostatectomy of any description was not on offer, it was straight to Oncology

for me. However, the presentation by Paul Rajjayabun was exceptional and full of information beyond a simple description of the new surgical procedures. We saw videos of staff training, starting with placing hoops on top of cones, then having to open doors on a training aid, pick up an object and move it to another location, using only the robotic arms. I sat there in complete silence. It was amazing to see the audience totally engrossed.

We learnt about the future of surgery. Other departments within the trust are now investigating how robotic surgery could help them and their patients. One ironic fact came towards the end of the evening. Other hospital trusts are now only offering robotic surgery for a prostatectomy, so anyone with complex needs was having to find alternative arrangements. Talk about going full circle! Paul talked about Worcestershire's ageing but active male population, inevitably leading to many men at some point knocking at the hospital's door for treatment.



Mark and his brothers meet up by the River Dee with Chester in the background

I hate to have to rate a meeting, but this was the best and most interesting presentation I have attended since joining the support group. Like most of the audience, I was glued to my seat, listening and learning. As I said at the start, in theory it held no interest for me, but it was an excellent presentation.

Mark Howard

OBITUARY

FAUSTO AMOROSO : TRIBUTE TO A KEY HELPER

We would like to pay a special tribute to Fausto Amoroso from Bishampton who died late last year. He will be sadly missed.

There are many KWPCSG members who give us help but in the background, who are key non-members providing essential support.

Whenever we needed to review our Flyer, we approached Fausto Amoroso who provided guidance, text changes and design improvements that immediately gave us a piece of professional publicity material.

Fausto gave unstintingly of his time for free despite many draft changes. He also designed our Open Meeting posters and delivered them ready for the printers at very short notice. Faust was a real gentleman. Patient with our demands, speedy in responses and always generous of spirit.

Gordon Kingston

AN INVITATION TO JOIN THE SOUTH WARWICKSHIRE PROSTATE CANCER SUPPORT GROUP

The Group is for those in South Warwickshire whose lives are affected by cancer of the Prostate; the men, their partners and their families.

We hold a mixture of local and plenary meetings. The small local meetings are held in Stratford, Leamington, Great Alne and Brailes. For details, please see our website.

Plenary meetings in 2023 will be held at the Old Leamingtonians Rugby Club, Bericote, CV32 6QP. We meet every other month on

Thursdays from 5-7pm
Next Meeting: 13th July

We offer telephone support to individuals with prostate cancer, and we also have a buddy system. Please check out our website, accessible via
www.southwarwickshirepcsg.org.uk

In the first instance please contact
Doug Badger, the Support Group organizer,
On badgersett@live.co.uk
Or 01789 488422
Or text on 077 84545 513

In addition, you may like to contact one or both of the available helplines.

Prostate Cancer UK free helpline (staffed by specialist nurses)
TACKLE free helpline (staffed by men with prostate cancer)

0800 074 8383
0800 035 5302

TACKLE'S NEW LEADERS AND TRUSTEES

Although Tackle's annual conference in Birmingham was forwarded to Monday, April 20th. due to a rail strike and attended by KWPCSG representative, Gordon Kingston, the PC charity's AGM was conducted on Thursday, April 16th., as originally planned but via Zoom.

Tackle, which is the umbrella organisation for the 95 PC support groups across the country, reported on a transformative year, which included ongoing structural reform involving Prostate Cancer UK. Under the leadership of acting Chair Dr. Steve Allen and, in particular, with the support of Aidan Adkins (Solihull PCSG), Roshani Perera (healthcare management consultant) and Sarah Gray (Tackle's National Support and Development Manager), the charity was able to report



Tony Collier, one of 4 new Tackle trustees

At the meeting Aidan and Roshani were elected as co-Chairs with Steve continuing as a board member. With some of the 7 trustees standing down, elections were conducted nationally across the support groups and 4 new trustees were appointed. They are:

- Tony Collier (Altrincham / Facebook PCSG): Tony was diagnosed with stage four prostate cancer in 2017 after noticing a pain in his groin while training for an ultra-marathon. The diagnosis did not stop him from running, and in 2022 he set himself the challenge of running 5k every day for a year. Tony is an ambassador for Prostate Cancer UK. He helps to manage the online Facebook Prostate Cancer Support Group with over 4000 active members. **Tony is our guest speaker in Pershore on September 14th.**
- Simon Faulkner (Metro Walnut PCSG , East London): Simon was diagnosed 12 years with prostate cancer ago. His treatment included being on Active Surveillance, then going through nerve sparing surgery, and he is now dealing with increasing PSA and with ADT and hormone treatment. His career in the Arts included 17 years in the collections department at the Tate. As a gay man with PC, he understands not being able to have the conversations you might want to have in NHS environments or at generic support group level.

Simon set up the METRO Walnut PCSG, works with PCUK running the Active Surveillance group and promotes the importance of early diagnosis across the LGBTQ+ community.

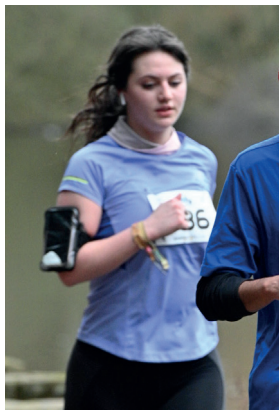
- Peter Corbishley (KWPCSG): Peter was diagnosed with locally advanced PC in 2016 and underwent both a radical prostatectomy and, a year later, residual radiotherapy. He is a trustee of KWPCSG and became the editor of its Supporter Magazine in 2020. A former modern languages teacher and director of his own language school, he is a keen tennis player and was until recently a trustee of Pershore Tennis Centre.
- Ken Mastris (APPLE, London & Essex): Ken was diagnosed with prostate cancer many years ago. He is a dedicated patient advocate. He was previously Chair of Tackle Prostate Cancer UK and is the current Chair of the Association of Prostate Cancer Patients in London and Essex (APPLE) Ken was the President of the European Cancer Patient Coalition in 2020/21 . He was previously Chair of Europa Uomo and has been involved in other European organisations including the European Association of Urology (EAU) and European Cancer Organisation (ECO).



FUNDRAISING



ELLA HOLDEN'S KWPCSG CHARITY RUN



Ella competing in the Birmingham half-marathon

After many months of training, I completed the Birmingham Half Marathon on February 19th. and couldn't have felt any more content whilst doing so! The atmosphere was so heartening, and it truly felt like a team achievement, despite the fact we were all strangers.

The entire course was in Sutton Park and involved four laps of the park with a steep incline to finish. On the morning of the run, my Mum, Kerry, accompanied me and watched on as I met with fellow racegoers and attended the group warm-up session. Though I was a little apprehensive at the start, due to the bottleneck effect and sheer panic of wanting to break away whilst maintaining a calm demeanour, I tried to focus on the feeling of finishing, irrespective of how exhausted I'd feel.



Ella with her grandfather at the end of the race

For the first 5k, I felt a little uncomfortable since the pace was quicker than I'd expected, but I found this to be a common experience after exchanging sympathetic looks and talking with other runners during the run. The moment the first lap was completed, I settled into the pace and really started to feel more comfortable.

For the final two laps, I turned my attention to the surroundings, chatting with runners who ran beside me. The time finally came for me to increase my pace and prepare for the final sprint, which was lined with hundreds of supporters and loud cheers. I passed through the archway and stepped onto the plastic ramp which would record my finishing time. I was overcome with emotion and honestly wanted to continue with the run! The Go-Fund-Me goal has been well surpassed, and I want to thank you all for donating and simply sharing the story. Thank you again for taking the time to read, and I would be more than happy to run for charity for your support group again.

Finally, I want to express my deepest thanks towards Mark Howard, his brothers and their families for such generous donations. It was hugely motivational, and I couldn't be more grateful for this encouragement.

Ella Holden



MISSING MEN
PROSTATE AWARENESS

CELEBRATING 75TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE NHS



This invitation is for anyone wishing to celebrate the landmark anniversary of the NHS in style in the magnificent setting of **Hartlebury Castle**. As you can see in the poster (above), the event takes place on **Saturday, July 8th**. Tickets for adults cost £15, over-14s just pay £5, while children go free.

The 6-hour extravaganza features:

- Alice Coley & The Fair Weather Riders
- Worcester Male Voice Choir
- Tenuto (accompanied by Si)
- Lady and the Sax



Local and West End tenor, David Lawrence, fronts the international singing group, Tenuto. They offer a feast of classical favourites delivered in style and packing powerful vocal harmony.

For younger ones there will be face-painting and a selection of fun games. Gates open at 12.00 and the main show starts at 13.00, finishing at 18.00, including intervals.

The organisers would like to thank all their sponsors, details of whom are listed on the QR code on this page along with more details of the event and access to purchasing tickets.

A vibrant, multi-colored poster for the 'SUMMER CONCERT' at Hartlebury Castle on Saturday, July 8th. The poster features a large group photo of the Worcester Male Voice Choir in the center. Below them are images of the performing acts: Alice Coley & The Fair Weather Riders, Tenuto, and Lady and the Sax. The background is a rainbow. Text on the poster includes 'Supporting NHS 75', 'Charity No. 1054612', and ticket prices: 'adults £15 (kids under 14 are free, please book so we are accurate on numbers), over 14's are £5'. A QR code is in the bottom left corner. Logos for Worcestershire Acute Hospitals Charity and the performing acts are also present.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS 2023

PSA TESTING EVENT (KIDDERMINSTER)

Thursday, June 8th. 2023 (16.00-20.00)

Harriers' Social Club, Stadium Close, Hoo Road, Kidderminster, DY10 1NB

This is an opportunity for men to sign up for a FREE PSA TEST
(see page 13 for more details)

SOUTH WORCESTERSHIRE PCSG

Wednesday, June 14th. (doors open at 6.30 pm for a 7.00 pm start)

Wychavon Civic Centre, Queen Elizabeth Drive, Pershore WR10 1PT

SPEAKER: DR. SIMON MURPHY

(Simon is a non-executive director on the board of Worcestershire AH NHS Trust)

MALVERN COFFEE & CHAT

Friday, , June 23rd. 2023 (10.30 – 12.00)

The Cube, Albert Road North, Great Malvern WR14 2YF

Free coffee and cake for every member, non-member and partner!!!

KIDDERMINSTER & WORCESTERSHIRE PCSG

Monday, July 17th. 2023 (doors open at 7.00 pm for a 7.30 pm start)

Harriers' Social Club, Stadium Close, Hoo Road, Kidderminster, DY10 1NB

SPEAKER : NEIL AUSTIN

(former Detective Superintendent in the West Mercia Police Force)

PSA TESTING EVENT (PERSHORE)

Thursday, September 7th. 2023 (16.00-19.00)

Wychavon Civic Centre, Queen Elizabeth Drive, Pershore WR10 1PT

This is an opportunity for men to sign up for a FREE PSA TEST
(see page 12 for more details)

SOUTH WORCESTERSHIRE PCSG

Thursday, September 14th. (doors open at 6.30 pm for a 7.00 pm start)

Wychavon Civic Centre, Queen Elizabeth Drive, Pershore WR10 1PT

SPEAKER : TONY COLLIER

(PCUK Ambassador, Tackle trustee and Ultra-Marathon Man)

Keep in touch with us via: Tel. 01299 832166

www.kwpcsg.co.uk / contact@kwpcsg.co.uk