

The Nerve



National support for all neurological conditions

January/February 2022



Burns Night: join us for poetry and haggis
The Brain Charity's clients star in national
TV appeal - with Sir Michael Palin
We need to know your views

Three stellar new trustees join The Brain Charity's board

The Brain Charity is delighted to introduce our three new trustees: Julie Blomley, Dr Perry Moore and Vanessa Boateng.

Vanessa is a councillor at Knowsley Town Council & believes her experience in engaging with ethnic minority groups will enhance the support needed by these groups from The Brain Charity.

Julie is a HR expert who has made a good recovery since experiencing a brain haemorrhage in 2019 and wants to support The Brain Charity by helping others through their recovery.

Dr Perry Moore is a consultant clinical neuropsychologist who works across the NHS and private practice. He is an associate fellow of the British Psychological Society and recognised on the Society's Specialist Register of Clinical Neuropsychologists.

We are grateful to the expertise all three will provide to our board, and appreciate their support.

A thank you and best of luck for the future must also go to our former trustee Theresa Lewin, who recently stepped down after more than 3 years on the board - but will remain involved as an HR mentor.



Vanessa Boateng



Julie Blomley

Winning poems from Liverpool Poetry Prize to be revealed at Brain Charity's Burns Night Supper



Roger McGough

(courtesy of
Nick Wright Photography)

The winning poems from a new poetry contest judged by Roger McGough will be revealed at The Brain Charity's Burns Night Supper this month.

The renowned Liverpool poet - hailed by Carol Ann Duffy as 'the patron saint of poetry' - will choose the winners of the new competition.

The Liverpool Poetry Prize has been launched by The Brain Charity to amplify new and contemporary voices, particularly from the neurodiverse community, and encourage creativity, which is beneficial to brain health. The winners will be announced and their poetry performed at **The Brain Charity's Burns Night Supper on January 22nd.**

The event, held at The Brain Charity's centre on Norton Street, Liverpool at 7pm, will mark a celebration of not just the life and poetry of the famous Scottish poet Robert Burns but of our Liverpool Poetry Prize winners too.

Tickets cost £7.50, which includes a traditional Burns Night Supper, recital of Address to a Haggis, whisky toast and music from a Scottish pipe band. The wearing of something tartan is strongly encouraged.

To get your tickets, go to bit.ly/TBCburnsnight

THE BRAIN CHARITY'S BURNS NIGHT SUPPER IS SPONSORED BY BIRCHALL BLACKBURN LAW



'Overnight, demand skyrocketed': COVID-19 impact laid bare in our annual report

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on people with neurological conditions has been laid bare in The Brain Charity's latest annual report.



Our newly-published interactive digital report documents the seismic impact of coronavirus on our clients - and the extent of the mental health crisis many faced. We are pleased to say that as demand for our services skyrocketed, The Brain Charity rose to the challenge. In the 2020-2021 financial year, we:

- Registered more than 3,500 new clients from across the UK.
- Delivered more than 1,200 counselling sessions.
- Made 1,014 food deliveries.
- Supported nearly 300 people to stay safe at home with online social activities.
- Organised weekly befriending calls to 114 isolated individuals.

The Brain Charity was not only able to weather the storm of COVID-19, but also pave the way for significant expansion in the coming year. To read the full report, go to bit.ly/TBCannualreport

The Brain Charity's website has had a makeover - check it out

Check out our brand new website!

Eagle-eyed supporters may have noticed that The Brain Charity's site has had a makeover.

We've worked hard to make it more accessible, easier to navigate and full of useful content for our clients, donors, fundraisers and anyone needing information on neurological conditions and how we can help.

Check it out at www.thebraincharity.org.uk and don't forget to send us your feedback - just email feedback@thebraincharity.org.uk

Hazel's story:

“Dementia took away my husband's ability to speak; Music Makes Us! helped us reconnect”



Hazel's husband Robert, 92, was diagnosed with vascular dementia with Lewy bodies in December 2018 following a heart attack and a stroke.

The retired engineer was discharged from hospital eight days later, but his health continued to decline following more transient ischaemic attacks - known as TIAs or 'mini strokes'. Hazel, a former teacher from Northwich, Cheshire, gave up work to care for Robert two and a half years ago after realising he was no longer safe at home on his own.

She said: *“You think you're prepared for something like this to happen, but when it actually happens to you, you realise you can never be prepared for someone you love being so different to how they were before.”*

Hazel discovered The Brain Charity's **Music Makes Us!** programme for people living with dementia in February this year after being recommended it by a support worker. The workshops - which combine singing with speech and language therapy and dance with physiotherapy and were previously held in care homes - moved online during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Hazel said: *“Robert absolutely loves all forms of music, so I thought we'd give it a try. It was brilliant - we did every session together. It was so enjoyable, but also something beneficial for Robert.*

“Even though he can no longer speak, he loves to play along to the songs with shakers and bells and will clap and hum to the tunes, and sway in his chair.

“Because the same people featured in the videos each week, they became familiar and Robert would wave at them and touch the screen as if he recognised them.

“When you're caring for a partner with dementia, it means so much to have that connection through music with them and see them smiling and happy.

“Seeing Robert engage with songs we used to dance to together was lovely to see, and gave back a sense of who he was before the dementia.”

Hazel said the best thing about the **Music Makes Us! Sing** and **Music Makes Us! Move** sessions was that they were pre-recorded so could be followed at whatever time was most convenient for them, and revisited over and over again.

Hazel enjoyed improved connection with her husband Robert and the social connection with other carers during The Brain Charity's **Music Makes Us!** sessions. She said for all carers of someone living with dementia, having a social connection with other people in similar situations through the community The Brain Charity creates was a big support.

Do you have a loved one who might benefit from The Brain Charity's **Music Makes Us!** programme? It's open to people from anywhere in the UK. Sign up online today by going to <https://bit.ly/TBCMUSICMAKESUS>

Surprise Christmas gift from Yoko Ono raises nearly £5,000 for The Brain Charity



The Brain Charity's volunteers Rose and Trina, chef Chris and client Anna with the vinyl & letter

A surprise Christmas gift from Yoko Ono - which left staff at The Brain Charity gobsmacked - has raised nearly £5,000.

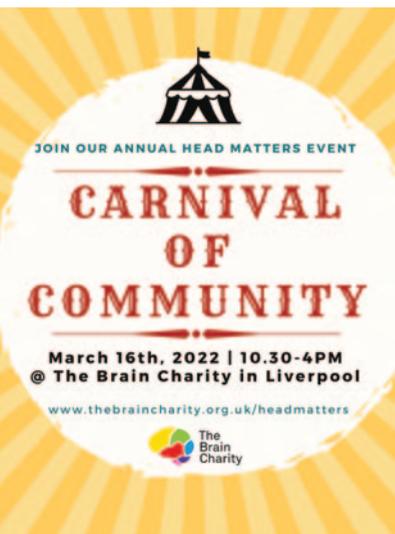
We were bowled over after the extremely rare and collectable limited edition vinyl acetate of John Lennon & Yoko Ono's iconic single 'Happy Xmas (War is Over)' arrived in the mail completely out of the blue. Global icon Yoko gave away 25 of the rare vinyl acetates to UK charities as a Christmas present for them to raise vital funds.

There was a personal note accompanying the record from Yoko and John's son Sean Ono Lennon, which read: "Happy Xmas. This is one of only fifty Limited Edition acetates hand-cut at Abbey Road, it's yours – to sell, auction, raise money to help your business or your favourite charity or to fund your Xmas party – to spread Xmas cheer. We'd love to see the journey these acetates take, and the goodwill that they spread."

The one-sided 12" acetate was hand-cut on the lathe at the legendary Abbey Road Studios and there were just 50 made in total, with the other 25 sold at independent record stores across the UK. When The Brain Charity's record was put on the charity's eBay account for Beatles fans to bid for, it raised an incredible £4,900 for our Sixmas appeal.

Nanette Mellor, CEO of The Brain Charity, said: "We were bowled over by this astonishingly generous surprise gift from Yoko and Sean.

"The recognition they thought about us in Liverpool at Christmas, when our clients really needed us, was unbelievable. It's such a lovely gesture to be recognised by a family who are globally iconic. We are all hugely moved. The funds from the sale of this incredible item were absolutely needed, as our clients with neurological conditions do really struggle around Christmas."



Head Matters: Carnival of Community

Head Matters is The Brain Charity's annual open day, where you can find out all about how we can support you - no matter whether you are completely new to The Brain Charity or are a regular visitor.

The theme for Head Matters 2022 is Carnival of Community - where we will be exploring what brings us together, how being part of a community is essential and how we can strengthen our own communities.

We will soon be announcing an exciting array of stall holders and experts leading talks and activities on the day.

Please follow this link and click the 'sign up' button to let us know you'll be attending: bit.ly/HeadMatters2022

Success of cycling scheme proves wheels really are for all with 245 miles ridden

A partnership between Cycling Projects and The Brain Charity has proved wheels really are for all - with 245 miles ridden to date.

The Brain Charity is working with Wheels for All Merseyside to offer a 'bike buddy' scheme to encourage our clients, volunteers and staff to get out and about on two wheels.

To date, 18 Brain Charity clients have ridden a combined 164 miles since the independent inclusive cycling programme began in April 2021. Liverpool Wheels for All Coordinator Jim Yeoman has also been working to build a lasting cycling culture amongst staff at The Brain Charity.

Six workers have joined the project since October 2021, most of whom had never ridden on the road previously - and have clocked up an impressive 81 miles cycling to and from the office.

A bike storage container has also now been installed on-site at our centre. This month, work will begin to redevelop the area it is based in, transforming it from an under-used car park into a welcoming and safe cycling space for the local community to use.

One Bike Buddy participant and Brain Charity client, who had a major stroke in 2020, told Cycling Projects the sessions were 'the highlight of his week' and a clear boost to his mental health. Wheels for All Coordinator Jim said: "Every participant in the Bike Buddy scheme is different, and all have different goals and journeys. The partnership has shown how inclusive cycling can improve lives of people with disabilities, not solely as an activity they attend, but also an integral part of their lives and developing independence."



The South Liverpool Inclusive Cycling Club at Otterspool Prom



The Brain Charity staff cycling



Dee Collins cycling

Please take part in Edible Wall survey

The Brain Charity is still working with Farm Urban to become the first charity in the UK to have its own Edible Wall.

They have launched a new study to find out how people with neurological conditions choose what food they eat and whether you like to spend time outside in nature. We think having an Edible Wall in our Liverpool HQ could be life-changing for our community, but we need your views to make this exciting vision a success.

Please follow this link to take part in the survey: bit.ly/EdibleWallsurvey

The Brain Charity's clients star in national TV appeal, presented by Sir Michael Palin



The Brain Charity's clients have starred in a national BBC TV appeal presented by Sir Michael Palin.

Our Lifeline appeal brought the work of The Brain Charity to a national audience by telling the stories of three people who have benefitted from our support - Rachel, Lindsey and Sammee.

The BBC Lifeline crew travelled across the UK to see first-hand how The Brain Charity helps people with all forms of neurological condition to lead longer, healthier, happier lives by providing practical advice, emotional support and creative activities.

They filmed with mum-of-three Lindsey, from Dunbar, Scotland, who was diagnosed with secondary progressive MS in her brain in October 2020. The 60-year-old former deputy headteacher went from being a highly paid, hard-working professional to wondering how her family was going to cope. She found the practical advice she received from The Brain Charity's Information & Advice Officer Janet 'life-changing' and said this reminded her that there was still a future for her post-diagnosis.

The eight-minute film also featured Rachel, 46, from Cheshire, who spent two weeks in a coma and had to learn to walk and talk again after experiencing a brain haemorrhage. After an operation to remove the tangle of blood vessels which had caused the haemorrhage, Rachel began to make a physical recovery but struggled mentally.

She found it difficult to leave the house due to low confidence around her speech, which had been affected, and experiencing debilitating night terrors that she was back in intensive care. In May 2020, she was offered six weeks of free counselling from The Brain Charity - which she said was a lifeline - and has since decided to give back by becoming a volunteer phone befriender.

Finally, the programme focussed on 18-year-old Sammee, who has Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and recently moved to Liverpool from London. The Brain Charity's Brain Changer Arts Project sessions - which combine neuro-physiotherapy and dance - have helped him gain confidence, express himself creatively and make new friends.

Sir Michael Palin gave his time to present The Brain Charity's appeal due to personal experience of the impact of neurological conditions - his wife was diagnosed with a benign brain tumour more than 25 years ago, and he saw his Monty Python colleague Terry Jones face the effects of dementia before his death last year.

He said: "Neurological conditions have the potential to wreak havoc on the lives of those they affect; something my family and I can relate to.

"My wife was diagnosed with a benign brain tumour more than 25 years ago, and it was a worrying and frightening time for our family.

"That's why the important work of The Brain Charity is a cause very close to my heart.

"I am delighted to support them by presenting their Lifeline appeal, and hope the film encourages many much-needed donations for such a worthwhile cause."

You can still support The Brain Charity by watching our Lifeline appeal on BBC iPlayer, by heading to [bbc.in/3F2d1kW](https://www.bbc.com/iplayer/programmes/b093388d)



Lindsey



Rachel



Sammee



The Brain Charity's CEO Nanette Mellor with Michael Palin

Introducing The Brain Charity's new employability course... **Neuro-versity!**

This six-week immersive and fun curriculum is led by The Brain Charity's employment team.

Through personalised career advice and guided sessions, each week you and your classmates will learn various tips and tricks including:

- Recognising your skills, boosting your career ambitions and setting professional goals
- Employment tips including bespoke CV and job application help
- Self-confidence to empower you to go for new opportunities
- Live job/training course searching
- Interview practise including how to sell yourself and your skills
- Introductions to hiring employers, training providers or placements
- Mock interviews and site visits
- A graduation ceremony on completing the course.

Neuro-versity is suitable for anyone interested in:

- A new work opportunity, gaining a qualification or new skill through training, a volunteering placement
- Exploring self-employment or becoming economically active
- Gaining self-confidence and socialise with others

Classes are capped to eight students for maximum engagement.

Sessions will run for two hours (with breaks) at The Brain Charity on Wednesdays 11am - 1pm, starting Jan 12th.



The course is free, but participants need to be residing in Liverpool City Region (Halton, Knowsley, Liverpool, St. Helens, Sefton or Wirral areas), be aged 18-65 and claim an unemployment benefit to take part.

Here's what one recent graduate had to say: "Thank you very much for the chance to take part in Neuro-versity. So much time, thought, planning and effort was put into the course.

"I learnt so much on the course for when I'm ready to move forward in my life.

"I felt fully supported throughout the course and would recommend others to attend."

Want to join the course? Sign up today by emailing employment@thebraincharity.org.uk or call **0151 298 2999** and ask for the employment team to find out more.

Time to get active in new neuro-gym, opening this year

The Brain Charity is set to open a new neuro-gym thanks to a generous donation from an individual donor.

The anonymous donor made a large donation to fund a new gym for people with neurological conditions in our centre, due to finding there were limited physiotherapy and rehab opportunities in the local area when recovering from brain tumour surgery. The Brain Charity's former library has been transformed into a light, bright airy space which will house specialist adapted and wheelchair-friendly gym equipment.

We also plan to run exercise classes in the space, and physiotherapy appointments will be available. Follow The Brain Charity on **Facebook, Instagram and Twitter** to keep updated on the build - and we will announce the gym's official opening soon.

The Brain Charity needs to hear from you!

Please share your views



The Brain Charity needs to hear from you about your neurological condition, how it affects your life and how we can help.

We need to understand what issues you are facing right now, particularly as we emerge from the difficult years of living with COVID-19.

We also need to know which of our services you access, or feel you need support from.

Finally, we would be keen to find out how receiving support from The Brain Charity has helped you.

To find answers to these questions, we have launched a new community survey, which is really important for a number of reasons:

Your voice is the most important!

As a person who has a neurological condition, or a carer for someone who does, The Brain Charity is your charity. Our services are you, so we must ensure everyone who uses them has a voice and is able to share their feedback.

The Brain Charity must reflect your needs

Being a charity means resources can be limited. Running surveys like this enable us to focus our funding and staff hours where they are most needed and provide services which will be the most beneficial.

The pandemic has been a tough time for us all

We know that many people's circumstances will have changed because of coronavirus. Now, as we slowly emerge from COVID-19, this survey will help us to plan for the future.

This helps us appeal to funders

Our funders need to understand the communities that they are giving money to support. Filling in a survey like this is one of the best ways to tell funders that our community deserves investing in. The more data we have, the more chance we have of securing grants, and ultimately providing even more services.

To fill in the survey, go to: bit.ly/TBCshareviews

Paper copies of the survey will also be available in the centre from the first week of January, and will be provided at our January and February coffee mornings.



Spotlight on: The Hidden Disabilities Sunflower hits the road

Did you know that drivers with disabilities represent around 5% of the driving population? But in the unfortunate result of a vehicle breaking down, research has shown some of the issues road users with disabilities encounter, such as being able to safely exit their vehicle, anxiety and distress.

In many ways, a person's disability is always invisible when they're in a vehicle. So, the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower has partnered with National Highways, who manage England's motorways and major A-roads, to ensure that people with a non-obvious disability feel confident, that they will receive the help they need, if they break down or need assistance. Displaying the Sunflower sticker, or magnet, on the rear of your vehicle will indicate to traffic officers that you may require additional support.

Paul Pengelly, a Sunflower wearer, said this about the new partnership: "I have fibromyalgia along with anxiety and a personality disorder, which affects my general mobility. If a vehicle I'm travelling in, is broken down or in an accident, exiting the vehicle quickly and safely would be difficult for me. Having the Sunflower on the back of my car informs National Highways traffic officers that they should ask me what extra support I might need so that they can do their job safely while making sure that no harm comes to me, the other occupants and passing traffic."

The Hidden Disabilities Sunflower for vehicles is free to road users in England and can be ordered at:

hiddendisabilitiesstore.com/national-highways



Paul Pengelly



Spotlight on: Cerebral Palsy campaign highlights barriers and challenges - by asking the public to complete challenges with one hand

Gina Patel launched social media campaign 'CPEverydayLife' to highlight the physical barriers and challenges that people living with Cerebral Palsy face in their everyday lives.

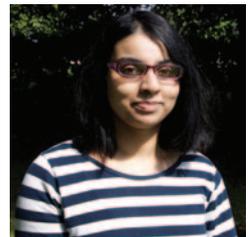
Her campaign asks the public to undertake an everyday task, such as preparing a meal/snack, going shopping, travelling on public transport and applying make-up, using only one hand.

Gina said "Around 170,000 people living in the UK have Cerebral Palsy. Approximately 1,800 children are diagnosed every year.

"Cerebral Palsy affects people in different ways, and I am pleased that this campaign will give encouragement and support to people living with the condition and raise awareness amongst non-disabled people."

To take part, record your effort and post on social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn with the hashtag #CPEverydayLife.

For more information, search 'cpeverydaylife' on Instagram.



Gina Patel





The
Brain
Charity

NEW YEAR, NEW ACTIVITIES

SHARED READING

Every Monday commencing 10th January 2022, 12pm – 1pm

Do you like reading? This session provides readers with the necessary support to allow them to enjoy materials they may not be able to read on their own. Come and have an awesome reading experience.

ART CLUB

Every Monday (apart from when coffee morning is on), running 17th January 2022 - 11th April 2022, 10am - 12pm

Do you want to bring out your creative side? Be a part of our enriching, relaxing arts sessions – featuring painting, photography, collage, drawing and more. Participants can join online or in-person.

LAUGHTER YOGA

Every Monday, running 10th January 2022 - 14th February 2022, 1pm - 3pm

Do you need to let go of daily life stressors? Join our exciting 6 week laughter yoga class to improve your breathing, health and wellbeing. It's long been said that "laughter is the best medicine", so why not put that theory to the test with laughter yoga at The Brain Charity. These exercise sessions aim to cultivate joy and bring out your inner child - so if you fancy having a laugh with us, please come along.

SPEECH AND LANGUAGE THERAPY

Dates & times provided upon request

We can provide life-changing assessments, treatment and support for children and adults who have difficulties with communication, especially people living with aphasia and other similar neurological conditions. Please note, sessions are pre-booked and limited spaces are available.

KNIT AND NATTER

Every Wednesday, 10am - 12pm

Our friendly 'Knit and Natter' group is ideal for beginners. Proficient knitters may bring along their current projects and maybe share some of their skills too. Anyone affected by a neurological condition is welcome to attend, including friends and carers. You can join online or in-person.

COFFEE MORNING

First Monday of each Month, starting 10th January

Anyone with a neurological condition, their friends and carers are welcome to join us at our regular coffee mornings.

There will be a mixture of advice and information available along with the opportunity to meet up with other people who have neurological conditions, to share experiences and have a chat. We often have special speakers too.

Refreshments are free and there's a nice relaxed atmosphere for you to enjoy. If you're interested in volunteering with us you can also find out what we have to offer and what's involved in becoming a member of our team.

Coffee mornings are held in The Brain Charity centre and will also run simultaneously online over MS Teams for people who prefer to join us from the comfort of their home.

CHOIR PRACTICE

Day TBC, 4pm - 5pm

You are welcome to our informal group choir practice, where you enjoy yourself and socialise whilst gaining some singing skills without pressure. Participants are welcome to join online and in-person,

To register for any activity, email activities@thebraincharity.org.uk

Ways you can support us

We are very grateful for any support during these challenging times.



DONATE ONLINE

Making a regular or a one-off donation will help The Brain Charity continue to do the amazing work it does on a daily basis. Donating couldn't be simpler. Just visit: www.bit.ly/give2TBC to give an amount of your choice today!

DONATE BY TEXT

Give just £3 now by texting **BRAIN** to **70460**. Texts cost £3 plus one standard rate message. If you'd like to give £3 but do not wish to receive any marketing communications, text **BRAINNOINFO** to **70460**.

AMAZON SMILE

You can also choose to support us when shopping through the Amazon Shopping app on iPhone or Android or on Amazon's website - just be sure to bookmark the smile.amazon.co.uk

site and use it each time you shop.



You shop. Amazon gives

WEBSITE SHOP

We offer all our charity-branded items for sale, from t-shirts to teas, through our online store: www.thebraincharity.org.uk/shop

EASY FUNDRAISING

When you sign up as a supporter with easy-fundraising 5,700 shops and sites, including all the big names, will donate for free every time you shop online: www.bit.ly/TBCeasy



ABOUT THE BRAIN CHARITY

The Brain Charity offers emotional support, practical help and social activities to anyone with a neurological condition and to their family, friends and carers.

For more information, contact the centre or visit our website:

www.thebraincharity.org.uk

Connect with us:



You can also find us on:



by searching for The Brain Charity

If you wish to be added to our mailing list, to receive news and fundraising updates including The Nerve, please go to www.bit.ly/signupTBC or ask our information team (on the numbers and email addresses below) to add you to the list.

The Brain Charity, Norton Street,

Liverpool L3 8LR

Tel: 0151 298 2999

Helpline: 0800 008 6417

Email: info@thebraincharity.org.uk

The Nerve is available in large text on request and as a PDF on The Brain Charity website:

www.thebraincharity.org.uk

The Brain Charity is registered as a charity (No: 1114999) and a company limited by guarantee in England and Wales (No: 05741930)