

# The Nerve



National support for all neurological conditions

May/June 2023



**It's our 30th birthday! Look back over three decades  
of The Brain Charity**

**Farewell to CEO Nanette and our longest-serving  
staff member Chris**

**Art therapy, internet safety sessions and new age  
kurling all launching soon**

# Have you had a great experience?

## Please let us know!



More and more people are now finding The Brain Charity via Google, so if you've had a great experience with our services, café, room hire or anything else, please take a few moments to leave a Google review.

Simply search for us on Google and tap to leave a review, or visit this page in your browser: [www.bit.ly/TBCGrev](http://www.bit.ly/TBCGrev) and leave a brief summary of your experience with us, plus a rating.

At The Brain Charity we're always looking for ways to improve, and your feedback is essential to that process. If you have any negative feedback or concerns, please contact our management team at [feedback@thebraincharity.org.uk](mailto:feedback@thebraincharity.org.uk) and they will address the matter.

## Co-op shopper? Select us as your cause

The Brain Charity is delighted to have been chosen as one of the charities to receive support from the Co-op Local Community Fund this year.

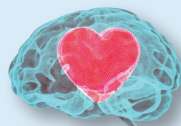
If you're a Co-op member please follow this link and choose us as your cause:  
[www.bit.ly/TBCcoop](http://www.bit.ly/TBCcoop)

Then 2p for every £1 you spend on selected Co-op products & services will be donated to The Brain Charity over the next 12 months.

### Not a Co-op member yet?

You can become one for just £1, which gives you discounts on purchases as well as allowing you to choose us as your charity for the year:  
[www.coop.co.uk/membership](http://www.coop.co.uk/membership)

## Catch up with Head Matters talks



We were lucky enough to have some amazing speakers at our Head Matters event to mark Brain Awareness Week in March. In case you missed their talks, you can now catch up with the following talks on YouTube:

*An exploration of sleep issues with Specialist Sleep Practitioner Helen Rutherford, from The Sleep Charity - [www.bit.ly/Nerve2351](http://www.bit.ly/Nerve2351)*  
and

*Brain injury rehabilitation with Professor Gus Baker - [www.bit.ly/Nerve2352](http://www.bit.ly/Nerve2352)*

Don't forget to subscribe to our YouTube channel and hit the bell to be notified of our next video as soon as it's released!

## Having a wardrobe clear out?

**The Brain Charity now partners with We Recycle Clothes to raise funds from your pre-loved clothes.**

You can arrange collections through their website, which is hassle-free and easy to use. Pre-loved clothes will find a new home and heavily worn garments will be recycled ethically. Book a collection online today: [www.bit.ly/Nerve2353](http://www.bit.ly/Nerve2353)

# We're saying goodbye to two influential Brain Charity staff members

This summer, we are sadly saying goodbye to two important members of The Brain Charity's team.

**Our CEO Nanette Mellor is leaving for pastures new after nine years in the role.**

During her tenure, The Brain Charity has seen:

- Income growth from £385,000 to £1.6 million
- Staff team growth from less than 10 to more than 50
- Thousands of people affected by neurological conditions from across the UK helped each year
- Neurodiversity championed and discrimination challenged

We wish her all the best for her new role as CEO of Drake Music. Details of The Brain Charity's new CEO will be released in due course.



Nanette Mellor

**We are also soon to say goodbye to Chris Wall, The Brain Charity's longest-serving member of staff.**

Chris has worked at The Brain Charity for 30 years and was one of the first original staff members to join the organisation. He has held many roles over the decades, from looking after the building to supervising our room hire business and, most recently, serving up his famous lemon drizzle cake in The Brain Food Café.

Chris is now looking forward to a well-deserved retirement filled with travel, family and hobbies and we wish him well.



Chris Wall

## Emotions can be messy, just like art

**The Brain Charity is now offering art therapy provided by Jess Keeler, a trainee art therapist from the University of Chester. Art therapy is a form of psychotherapy where feelings, thoughts and emotions can be expressed through making art.**

You don't have to be 'good' at art or consider yourself a creative person.

Art therapy can help you by:

- Raising self-esteem, increasing confidence and reducing anxiety.
- Looking at and, if you want to, talking about your art, your thoughts and your emotions in a safe place.
- Helping you to express yourself safely.
- Safely exploring things that trouble you.
- Finding the right way for you to communicate.

Anyone who would like to participate will be offered up to 10 50-minute sessions held at The Brain Charity's centre every Tuesday.

If you are interested please complete the form on this page: [www.bit.ly/Nerve2365](http://www.bit.ly/Nerve2365), email [counselling@thebraincharity.org.uk](mailto:counselling@thebraincharity.org.uk) or call Counselling Coordinator Sharon Berry on 0151 207 8524.



## Joanne's cerebral palsy story:

# "I was accused of being drunk due to a lack of understanding of my disability"

**Joanne was diagnosed with cerebral palsy when she was 18 months old. Her condition means she struggles with muscle weakness, difficulty walking and issues swallowing.**

**When she went to school, Joanne was bullied by other students for being different.**

In 2020, Joanne was refused service in a pub because staff thought she was drunk due to her slurred speech – a result of her condition. She said there is a lack of awareness around conditions like cerebral palsy and an unwillingness to engage with people with less visible disabilities.

Joanne said: "I want everyone to be more aware of these invisible conditions so people with them can be treated with more dignity.

*"I've had people think I'm drunk before. The staff didn't apologise or even listen – it felt like I was back in school being bullied.*

*"At the time I felt like I couldn't stand up for myself, and I hate to think that other people might be in a similar situation. Even if this happened to one other person, that is too many."*

Her cerebral palsy meant Joanne, from Liverpool, had to leave her job as a support worker due to fatigue.

In 2021, she was introduced to The Brain Charity's new employment team and has



taken part in confidence coaching sessions with Mandy, The Brain Charity's Employment Confidence Coach.

She said: "My confidence was at a 2 out of 10 before doing my sessions with Mandy. Now I'd say I'm an 8 or even a 9.

*"It's been a struggle to accept my cerebral palsy even though I've had this diagnosis pretty much my whole life, but these sessions have helped me come to terms with it.*

*"I've been able to shift my focus from what I'm not able to do and open my eyes to the skills I can offer."*

# Making light of life with epilepsy

**When James Nelson was diagnosed with epilepsy, he noticed there was a lack of books which touched upon the humorous side of the condition - usually focusing on medicine and research.**

While epilepsy isn't a light-hearted topic, being able to find humour in many scenarios - such as his complex partial seizures occurring at inappropriate times - has been his coping mechanism.

These make up his new book *Small Malcolm Grows Up*, a biographical account of living with epilepsy.

People often don't recognise that I'm having a seizure. They're not the convulsive type that we are (sometimes) educated on at school.

My seizures are complex partial or focal, a type which effects 20 per cent of the UK population. The usual protocol is 20 to 30 seconds of shouting, occasional spitting - the part I detest the most - and general bewilderment.

In the post-seizure period, I am very confused. It's this second part that causes some unforeseen and hilarious calamities.

Now let's be clear; epilepsy isn't a funny topic. However, being able to find humour in it has been my coping mechanism for 30 years.

In a recent episode, I walked out of a supermarket with a basket full of unpaid food in my hand. I remember entering the supermarket. The next thing that I was aware of is being halfway home, a 10-minute walk away, with the basket of goods in my hand.

I hoped that the manager of the supermarket would have some leniency when I offered an explanation. I returned, showed her the photo of the goods that I'd inadvertently thieved and offered to pay. She told me it didn't matter and thanked me for my honesty.

I find it rewarding when I can educate others about my seizures and epilepsy. It is a very underfunded medical condition.

Epilepsy is most commonly experienced by the very young or the very old. I am one of the unlucky few who has encountered it in a prime life stage, my first seizure occurring aged 16.

No medication has had an influence on my seizure activity, but new ones are being developed all the time.

Organisations such as The Brain Charity are wonderful for people dealing with neurological conditions. With them and a resilient spirit, our alternative brain functions needn't completely govern our lives.



Find out more about **Small Malcolm Grows Up** at  
[www.smallmalcolm.co.uk](http://www.smallmalcolm.co.uk) or purchase a copy at  
[www.bit.ly/SmallM23](http://www.bit.ly/SmallM23)

# Marking 30 years of The

**The Brain Charity (formerly Neurosupport) started its life as The Glaxo Neurological Centre. This is our history.**

**1992**

A charity called Mersey Neurological Trust is first registered as a 'community neurology service' after Professor Ian Williams, medical director of The Walton Centre, recognises that more support was needed in the community for people with neurological conditions.

**1993**

**August:** The Glaxo Neurological Centre first opens its doors after receiving a £1 million grant from Glaxo Holdings PLC - via the Department of Health - to establish a community neurology centre where people with neurological conditions and their families could find information and access support. The building was designed around

- A library service to provide access to information about neurological conditions.
- An open plan office area for different neurological charities to be based in the centre.
- Accessible meeting rooms to enable people to come together to meet others with neurological conditions - at the time, pre-the Disability Discrimination Act, the centre was the only fully accessible building in Liverpool.

Initially there are just three staff including original CEO Maureen Kelly and Chris Wall so a team of volunteers with personal experience of neurological conditions are recruited.



Professor Ian Williams with Maureen Kelly

**1994**

**March:** The Glaxo Neurological Centre is officially opened by the Duke of Gloucester.

**2005**

The charity's trustees approached Glaxo - who had themselves changed their name to GSK - and asked for permission to change the name. This was granted and an open competition was held to allow people with neurological conditions to choose a new name.

**2006**

A new charity was registered with the new name - Neurosupport. It was registered as the successor to the Mersey Neurological Trust and the name and logo was the work of a relative of a client with a neurological condition.

**2010**

Following a review, Neurosupport began a closer relationship with The Walton Centre, with charity staff based within the hospital as link workers.

**2014**

After 21 years, Maureen Kelly retired as CEO of Neurosupport and Nanette Mellor became CEO.

**2015**

Neurosupport was officially renamed as The Brain Charity.

**2016**

A café opens at the centre to provide healthy, brain-boosting food to clients and members of the public. In 2017, it relaunches as The Brain Food Café.



**2017**

The Brain Charity is awarded the Queen's Award for Voluntary Services - the equivalent of an MBE for charities.



**2018**

The Brain Charity wins the 'Managing Turnaround' award at the 2018 Charity Governance Awards.

Our Music Makes Us! project providing speech and language therapy through singing and physiotherapy through dance for people living with dementia is launched.

**July:** The Brain Charity celebrates its 25th anniversary and holds a glittering awards ceremony.

# Brain Charity: our history

2018



2022



2019

**Summer:** Our Brain Changer Arts Project providing occupational therapy through art and physiotherapy through dance for children and young people with neurological conditions is launched.

**December:** Work is completed on a Changing Places accessible toilet facility. The Brain Charity becomes the first building in Liverpool outside major stadiums and shopping centres to have this.

The Henry Smith Charity provides the biggest core grant in the charity's history, of £117,000 over

2023

**May:** The Brain Charity currently has more than 50 staff and 80 volunteers. Our core services now include:

- Information and advice: one-to-one information about any neurological condition, helping clients stay informed about what their condition means for them, plus help accessing financial support such as housing aids and adaptations or individual grants.
- Employment support: We support clients to reach an employment situation that works for them; or helping them, build their confidence and access new opportunities.
- Welfare benefits advice: hands on support through the entire welfare benefits application process, including representation at tribunals.
- Emotional support: We operate a counselling service for our community, plus a telephone befriending service to reduce social isolation and confidence coaching.
- Social activities for clients, including arts classes, physical exercise sessions and educational workshops.

We also provide workplace neurodiversity training to businesses across the country, and criminal justice system neurodiversity training to organisations working with offenders.

2020

**March:** The COVID-19 lockdown closes The Brain Charity's centre and our staff switch to providing food parcels for vulnerable clients and running online activities.

**August:** As The Brain Charity's work counts as a core health service, we are able to reopen the centre safely to clients with social distancing measures in place.

2021

**October:** The Brain Charity's website relaunches.

**December:** The Brain Charity is featured on a UK-wide BBC TV fundraising appeal 'Lifeline' which is presented by Sir Michael Palin.

2022

**April:** The Brain Charity scoops two more prestigious awards being named Disability Champion at the Steve Morgan Foundation 20th Anniversary Awards, and Organisation of the Year at the Liverpool John Moores University Students' Union Society and Volunteering Awards.



To be  
continued...



The  
Brain  
Charity

# The Brain Charity's Midsummer Poetry Night

**We received a record number of entries for this year's poetry competition and the standard of the poems was incredibly high.**

It will be a very difficult task for our judge, the ground-breaking Liverpool-born poet Brian Patten, to narrow down the entries to a shortlist, but he is working hard to find the best poems of the year.

Thank you to everyone who entered the competition. We look forward to sharing the winners with you at The Brain Charity's Midsummer Poetry Night event, held at our centre in Liverpool on **Friday 23rd June at 7pm.**

Get your tickets today: [www.bit.ly/Nerve2336](http://www.bit.ly/Nerve2336)



Brian Patten



## *The power of music: how singing benefits the brain*

Singing is great for brain health, stimulating multiple areas of the brain at the same time. Here, The Brain Charity's choirmaster Grayson outlines the benefits of music for the brain - both physically, mentally and socially.

### **Singing and neuroplasticity**

Singing uses all parts of the brain at once, so you can rebuild neural pathways when you sing. This is known as neuroplasticity and it helps with memory and speech. For anyone who has had a stroke or brain injury, singing can be a vital part of their recovery.

### **How singing improves breathing and lung capacity**

A lot of people with neurological conditions find their symptoms can affect multiple parts of their body. For me, FND affects the way I breathe. The deep breathing and breath-holding required to sing help me with speech control, breath control, tongue movement and respiratory health.

Singing can also increase your lung capacity and can also positively impact the tics which can come from some neurological conditions.

### **Song lyrics and memory skills**

Remembering song lyrics is a really good way of training the brain. You can also rebuild memories with music. Music has been proven to help calm and regulate the emotions of people with dementia.

### **Music and mood**

Singing, particularly in a group, boosts the release of endorphins and serotonin – feel-good happy hormones which help with pain regulation. Performing live stimulates adrenaline, and singing improves your immune system by reducing cortisol.

### **The social benefits to joining a choir**

Seeing the same people each week and building social connections is extremely valuable for mental health. The main focus of The Brain Charity's choir is to build a social circle.

**Anyone is welcome to join our choir - whatever your age, gender or vocal ability  
we'd love to have you involved.**

**We meet weekly and to register, head to [www.bit.ly/Nerve2354](http://www.bit.ly/Nerve2354) or call 0151 298 2999.**

# Help us raise **£30,000** to mark our **30th Birthday!**



**To celebrate our 30th birthday, we've launched the 30 for 30 challenge. Here's 30 30-themed fundraising ideas you could try:**

- 1** Invite 30 friends to join The Brain Charity's lottery. It costs just £1, and you could win £25,000!
- 2** Cycle 30 miles a day for 30 days.
- 3** Play a round of golf at 30 different golf courses in a year.
- 4** Complete the Three Peaks Challenge within 30 hours.
- 5** Create a treasure hunt with 30 clues.
- 6** Host an afternoon tea party for 30 people.
- 7** Organise a virtual 30-hour gameathon.
- 8** Carry out 30 manicures, massages or men's haircuts in 24 hours.
- 9** Make sponsored Spotify playlist and invite 30 people you know to add songs in return for a donation.
- 10** Take a selfie in a Brain Charity t-shirt in 30 different locations.
- 11** Buy 30 Brain Charity pet bandanas & give them out to deserving furry friends.
- 12** Get together with friends for a sponsored 30km walk over a month.
- 13** Grow your best moustache for 30 days.
- 14** Give up your favourite snack for 30 days.
- 15** Help pack 30 bags at your local supermarket.
- 16** Do 30 sit ups or press ups every day for a month.
- 17** Take 30 days to create a work of art then auction your painting online.
- 18** Select 30 different cheeses for a cheese tasting evening with friends.
- 19** Have a 30-hour movie marathon!
- 20** Buy 30 of our '30 for 30' pin badges and send them to the people you care about.
- 21** Commit to one random act of kindness once daily for 30 days.
- 22** Write a blog every day for 30 days on your fundraising page.
- 23** If you're a parent, let your children choose your clothes for 30 days.
- 24** Camp out in your garden for 30 days.
- 25** Get creative and sell 30 of your crafty creations on Etsy.
- 26** Offer to clean the windows of 30 houses in the neighbourhood.
- 27** Sleep for 30 hours in a sponsorship Sleepathon...zzzzzz....
- 28** Donate 30 unwanted items of clothing.
- 29** Complete 30 different hairstyles or makeup looks.
- 30** Raise £30 in 30 minutes with colleagues.



**Some of The Brain Charity's fantastic recent fundraisers**

To start fundraising, email [fundraising@thebraincharity.org.uk](mailto:fundraising@thebraincharity.org.uk) or call Rob on **0151 207 8517**.

# Social activities May-June 2023

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
Mornings	<b>Art for wellbeing</b> 10am - 12.15pm (waiting list only)	<b>Mindfulness for beginners</b> 9.30am - 11.30am Until 23rd May	<b>Knit and natter</b> 10am - 12pm  <b>Crafters club</b> 10am - 12.15pm	<b>Ukulele for all</b> 11.00am - 12.00pm
Afternoons	<b>NEW! Chess club</b> 12.30pm - 1.30pm  <b>Maths</b> 1.45pm - 3.15pm (waiting list only)	<b>LCFA Walking football</b> 12.30pm - 1.45pm Starts Tuesday 13th June	<b>Boccia (indoor bowls)</b> 12.30pm - 1.30pm  <b>NEW! Drawing class</b> 1.30pm - 3.00pm	<b>Bat &amp; chat (table tennis)</b> 1.00pm - 2.00pm  <b>Hydroponics (indoor gardening)</b> 1.30pm - 3.00pm 4th May for 6 weeks
			<b>Asphasia talking table</b> 2.00pm - 3.00pm	<b>New age kurling</b> 2.00pm - 3.00pm Starts 22nd June
	<b>Shared reading</b> 3.15pm - 4.15pm		<b>Choir</b> 4.00pm - 5.00pm	

Coming in June! Music therapy (6-week block) booking is required, plus a follow-up call and chat.  
 Email [activities@thebraincharity.org.uk](mailto:activities@thebraincharity.org.uk)

## Pride 2023 with The Brain Charity

### Saturday 29th July 10.00am-1.30pm

**We will be walking with Pride this year! Will you join us?**  
**We are walking to celebrate diversity and raise awareness.**

We have our own wonderful banner to proudly raise and would love to invite you to walk alongside us for this sunny day in Liverpool. Meet up at The Brain Charity, Norton St, at 10am for the team talk and getting colourful!

Before all this, pop along to an informal session to chat about our plans for Pride 2023, Tuesday 23rd May 12pm - 1.30pm, sign up to walk, and meet our LGBTQ+ rep. John.

Learn about how we're making our charity more friendly and inclusive to all and get to know The Brain Charity.

[www.bit.ly/Nerve2355](http://www.bit.ly/Nerve2355)



## Be part of the future of rehabilitation

Participants are needed for feedback on a new wearable robotic exoskeleton which could help people with paralysis and weakness in their arms.

Focus group sessions will take place monthly on Thursdays from 12pm until 1pm and are running between April and July. Refreshments will be provided and those who attend all four sessions will receive a free £20 Love2Shop voucher.

[www.bit.ly/Nerve2363](http://www.bit.ly/Nerve2363)



## SAFETYNET

Be Online Aware

**SafetyNet - being scam aware,  
understanding fake news, and using social  
media safely + Google docs and Gmail.**

We are excited to launch our new, free training sessions at The Brain Charity in partnership with Ofcom. They will centre on being safe online, developing digital skills, and also giving carers the tools to help those who need support with internet safety. We'll cover all the main aspects of Google and Google docs.

We can lend devices (tablets, keyboard) to use on the day - time to get online!

**SafetyNet - Google Docs training:**

**Tuesday 16th, 23rd, 30th May 11.30am - 1.00pm**

**[www.bit.ly/Nerve2356](http://www.bit.ly/Nerve2356)**

**SafetyNet for parents: Thursday, 13th July,  
5pm - 6.30pm [www.bit.ly/Nerve2357](http://www.bit.ly/Nerve2357)**

## Carers toolkit launch

**Friday 12th May, 9.30.am-12.30pm**

We'd love for you to come and join us for the launch of our Peace of Mind carers project toolkit - an essential planning guide that will be really useful for both carers and people receiving care.

There'll be some tasty nibbles and some great guest speakers too.

Places for this free carers event at The Brain Charity are strictly limited, so please register online today:

**[www.bit.ly/Nerve2361](http://www.bit.ly/Nerve2361)**

## Midsummer Poetry Night

**Friday 23rd June at 7pm**

The winning poems from this year's Liverpool poetry competition - celebrating neurodiversity and judged by Brian Patten - will be announced at this event at The Brain Charity. The overall winner will receive a prize of £1,000.

Tickets are now on sale:

**[www.bit.ly/Nerve2336](http://www.bit.ly/Nerve2336)**

## Cuppa with a copper

**Monday 15th May 11.00am - 1.00pm**

Come and meet your friendly neighbourhood police officers and community support team from Merseyside Police at The Brain Charity. You can chat with them about any concerns you might have about anti-social behaviour or crime and they'll even treat you to a nice hot cuppa!

**[www.bit.ly/Nerve2359](http://www.bit.ly/Nerve2359)**

## Cream tea for carers

**Thursday 8th June, 9.30am-2pm**

If you are a parent or carer of a child or young person with a neurological condition, we'd love for you to join us at our 'caring for the carer' event to celebrate National Carers' Week!

You'll have the chance to try out a range of relaxing holistic therapies and take part in a short mindfulness session. Plus, you can receive information and support on your caring role and listen to a range of informative talks.

To top it all off, we'll be treating you to an early afternoon full cream tea!

To find out more and reserve your spot, please click the sign up button here:

**[www.bit.ly/Nerve2362](http://www.bit.ly/Nerve2362)**

# Ways you can support us

We are very grateful for any support during these challenging times. Here are some of the ways you can help:

## 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.thebraincharity.org.uk/donate](http://www.thebraincharity.org.uk/donate) to give an amount of your choice today!

## GIVE AS YOU LIVE



Give as you Live is a simple way for you to support The Brain Charity every time you shop with any of the major brands - at no extra cost to yourself. Getting involved is easy - just register at [www.bit.ly/GAYLTBC](http://www.bit.ly/GAYLTBC)

## 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**.

## 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](http://www.thebraincharity.org.uk/shop)

## DONATE VIA QR CODE

Scan the QR code below on your mobile phone camera now to donate:



The  
Brain  
Charity

## 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](http://www.thebraincharity.org.uk)

Connect with us:



[thebraincharity](https://www.facebook.com/thebraincharity)



[thebraincharity](https://twitter.com/thebraincharity)



[thebraincharity](https://www.instagram.com/thebraincharity)

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](http://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](mailto: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](http://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)