

# Leg Club update

## Volunteering with the Llandrindod Wells Leg Club®

In June 2006 I was asked by the team leader of the district/community nurses if I would be interested in volunteering with the Llandrindod Wells Leg Club®. Wow, I thought, could this club be anything to do with the Tiller Girls or Pan's People, or even Hot Gossip?

No it was not, but rather a club that the district/community nurses wanted to set up in a non-medical, friendly environment to treat people who have leg-related problems, such as ulcers, skin tears, eczema and poor circulation.

At the time I thought it would be a fantastic and challenging opportunity for volunteers to help set up a totally different environment for treating members of the public with leg-related problems.

The management committee was brought together consisting of ten members, four district/community nurses together with six volunteers. Meetings are held six times a year and there are sixteen committed volunteers.

The Llandrindod Wells Leg Club was ready to open its doors to the public in September 2006. A single, private donation helped with the set-up costs. The umbrella organisation of the Leg Club, the Lindsay Leg Club Foundation, is based in Ipswich and they advised us on several issues that helped with the smooth setting up and running of the club. To date, we have 300 patients on the register and the nurses treat on average 25 patients per week between 9.30AM and 12.00PM on Thursdays at St John's Hall in Llandrindod Wells.

Part of my role in the Leg Club is to manage the administration. A register of patients has been set up, and each patient has a file that is stored in a secure cabinet. I also arrange a three-monthly rota for the volunteers, with three volunteers attending weekly.

During the first year it became obvious that we needed to raise funds to continue improving our service to the community. We applied to Powys Association of Voluntary Organisations (PAVO) for funding and were lucky enough to be granted £1,500, which pays for the rent of the hall and any miscellaneous equipment. I apply annually for funding from this organisation and up until now have been successful.

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At this time it also became apparent that some of our patients would benefit from a basic foot care and toenail cutting service. When people get to a certain age they become less agile or wear varifocal glasses and basic foot care and cutting toenails becomes difficult. Having realised that there was a shortfall in toenail cutting services provided by the local health board (LHB), we enlisted the help of one of our volunteers, Ros, to take up foot care and toenail cutting for our patients.

Ros contacted a podiatrist with the LHB who was interested in our project at the Leg Club, and she agreed to train Ros and a community nurse in basic foot care and toenail cutting. Fortunately for us, she also agreed to attend the Leg Club monthly to treat some of her home visit patients, who also have leg-related problems, and other members of the club who have more complex toenail issues caused by diabetes and other complications. On average, she treats about nine members during this monthly visit. This situation has also proved useful for her as it



**Figure 1. Activities at the Llandrindod Wells Leg Club.**

has cut down her travelling time. The foot care and toenail cutting service is offered twice a month, enabling twelve members of the Leg Club to receive treatment.

Having agreed to provide a basic foot care and toenail cutting service, I thought I should get some outside sourced funding to run this new facility. I approached Age Concern who were extremely interested and provided funding for equipment and out-of-pocket expenses for Ros. The LHB agreed to sterilise the equipment after every session, which is very helpful.

We give our special thanks to Fronheulog Residential Care Home for providing us with tea, coffee and sugar for our weekly clinic. The volunteers run a weekly raffle and the 'team', including nurses and volunteers, raise funds by holding coffee mornings, country and western evenings, charity shops and bingo evenings. Donations are received

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from appreciative patients as well as bequests from patients' families who have been treated and subsequently passed away, and from volunteers' families who have been interested in the Leg Club ethos.

In 2007 it became evident that some of the community were unable to take part in the wonderful services of the Llandrindod Wells Leg Club due to being housebound, or unable to get transport. It was decided that we should try and source some outside funding. This time I approached the Big Lottery Awards for all Wales, and was granted funding to provide transport. Adeys Taxis provide the transport for about twelve members per week.

Systems are now in place to register patients, prepare a three-monthly rota, arrange appointments for toenail cutting, podiatry and transport, and for evaluating the restricted grant funding from PAVO, Age Concern and the Big Lottery Awards for all Wales. I have just completed a funding bid to the Big Lottery Awards for all Wales for transport and a sanitiser for the toenail cutting equipment.

In 2007 I applied to the Wales



Figure 2. Frances White-Hole, Leg Club Volunteer of the Year Award winner, 2008.

Council for Voluntary Action (WCVA) for a Group Wales Volunteer of the Year Award. We were awarded highly commended for our Leg Club.

In 2008 the Leg Club decided to award their first ever Volunteer of the Year Award and the Leg Clubs, of which there are 21 throughout the UK, were asked to nominate a volunteer. I was honoured when our team leader asked my permission to nominate me for this prestigious award.

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In August 2008 I was invited to attend the Leg Club Gala Ball, which was going to be held in October in Worcester. Typically, my first thoughts were, what am I going to wear?

I arrived at the venue and met up with several people who I had met through the past few years of Leg Clubbing. I enquired how many finalists there were, and then was whisked away to sit near the top table. It was a momentous evening, including a fabulous meal and interesting speeches. Then, the Volunteer of the Year Award was to be presented. There were eight finalists: five Leg Clubs tied for third place, and two joint runners up were announced. I then heard the Master of Ceremonies announce the first ever Leg Club Volunteer of the Year Award 'for outstanding volunteering and for putting into practice new administration systems and for seeing a shortfall in necessary related services, we are very

pleased and proud to award Frances White-Hole from the Llandrindod Wells Leg Club'. I could not believe it, I was so proud of myself, but more especially of the achievements of the Llandrindod Wells Leg Club. This year I nominated our group of volunteers for the Group Volunteer of the Year Award 2009.

On seeing my photograph as the Lindsay Leg Club Volunteer of the Year Award in the local newspaper, I was approached to talk at the Pensioner's Club of Llandrindod Wells. I did this accompanied by a district/community nurse and, as a result, we have recruited more new members.

The volunteers with the Llandrindod Wells Leg Club now run a professional, non-registered charity, which helps the local community. Roger Williams MP and Kirsty Williams are always interested to know how we are getting on and are supportive of all we have achieved.

This is what volunteering with the Llandrindod Wells Leg Club is all about — enhancing the brilliant service offered by the team of district/community nurses to help to make a non-medical, friendly environment for the many people in the community who suffer with leg-related problems.

I am humbled by the stoicism of the patients who suffer pain, stigma and isolation. Being able to help provide a friendly environment where patients can come together, receive treatment, and talk to the nurses, volunteers and each other is what makes volunteering with the Llandrindod Wells Leg Club so worthwhile. Members are able to meet up with old friends and make new ones over a cup of tea and to realise that we do care about their legs. If I can give them just a little something to make their lives more bearable, I am happy. **WUK**

**Frances White-Hole, Llandrindod Wells Leg Club, Leg Club Volunteer of the Year Award winner, 2008**