

Date: Wednesday 16 September 2020

Dear member,

At a recent trustee meeting we reviewed our face-to-face meeting policy, which I wrote about on 19th March. I am writing today with our latest decision to keep you all up to date.

Back in March we postponed all face-to-face meetings. At that time we thought it would be for a couple of months, but you may recall the start of lockdown on 23rd March, tightening up restrictions announced on 16th March. Our recent trustee meeting took place before the 'Rule of Six' restrictions were announced, which came into force on 14th September.

Group Position

Although various lockdown restrictions had been progressively reduced over the last two to three months, there is still a high number of cases being reported each day, and the trustees felt that it was inappropriate to consider restarting face-to-face meetings at this time.

Covid-19 is an illness which principally affects the respiratory system, and there is overlap between its symptoms and the flu, and we have decided there will be no face-to-face meetings during the flu season. For those who like specifics, we are next planning to review the situation in January 2021, and no face-to-face meetings will be held before 28th February 2021.

Virtual Meetings

I know that our meetings are important to many of you. The virtual AGM in July was a great success, and we were pleased to see so many of you on-line for this important event. Many members took the opportunity to try one of the test meetings we held in June, and by the AGM it was pleasing to see people being able to use the technology confidently.

There are usually several group meetings in the Autumn, and where possible these will now be held on-line using Zoom. I have given our excellent meeting organisers some training in how to use Zoom, and I hope that even more of you can use this technology to keep in touch with the group and with each other. Being able to communicate with others can help reduce feelings of isolation, can help find information and advice, and I encourage you to try this out if you can. Please ask for help if you need it. We'd also be pleased to hear from people who are familiar with Zoom and could help run these virtual meetings.

Updated Position on Coronavirus.

Since March there have been updates around the risk of complications from Covid-19, with the advice from the Association of British Neurologists being most recently updated in April. The general view is that HSP in itself puts you at a low risk of complications from Covid-19, although those with significant HSP may have a moderate risk of complications. In any case you should remember that the risk of complications with Covid-19 increases with increased age, increased weight, increased frailty and with increased disability. The risk is also increased if you have symptoms (whether HSP or otherwise) which affect your lungs, heart or kidneys.

I hope that you are all well, and I encourage you to stay safe.

Yours sincerely

Adam Lawrence
Chair