



Neuro Connect

the place where you can.

SUMMER 2026 | ISSUE NUMBER 02



**Nominated
for Disability
Charity of
the Year**

Visits from Lord
Mayor and local MP

What's new for
members

Refuel-MS study -
data collection site





**THERAPY HERE DOES NOT
HAPPEN IN ISOLATION. IT TAKES
PLACE WITHIN A WELCOMING,
SPECIALIST ENVIRONMENT
WHERE PEOPLE FEEL
UNDERSTOOD, SUPPORTED AND
PART OF A COMMUNITY.**

Letter from the Chief Executive

As we welcome another summer, I can't help but reflect on what an exciting few months it has been for Kent Neuro Therapy Centre.

I am incredibly proud that we have been shortlisted for Kent Charity of the Year in the Disability category. This recognition belongs to every member of our community - our staff, volunteers, supporters and, of course, our members. We recently welcomed the judging panel to the Centre and were delighted by how impressed they were with both our facilities and the incredible work taking place every day. We look forward to hearing the result in September.

This summer has also seen us reach a significant milestone. For the first time in the Centre's history, demand for our services has exceeded our immediate capacity. Whilst we never want anyone to wait longer than necessary, it is a clear reflection of the growing reputation of Kent Neuro Therapy Centre as a provider of high-quality specialist neurological rehabilitation. We are working hard to increase capacity and reduce waiting times so that even more people can benefit from our services.

The recent spell of exceptionally hot weather also brought its own challenges. To protect the wellbeing of our members, staff and volunteers, we made the difficult decision to close the Centre for three days and postpone our Summer Fayre. Whilst disappointing, everyone's safety had to come first, and we are taking steps to help keep the Centre cooler during future periods of extreme heat.

Thank you, as always, for your continued support. I hope you enjoy a wonderful summer.

With warm wishes,

Chief Executive

Heidi Coleman

**WE ARE DELIGHTED TO
ANNOUNCE THAT WE
HAVE BEEN NAMED A
FINALIST FOR
DISABILITY CHARITY OF
THE YEAR AT THE 2026
KENT CHARITY
AWARDS.**

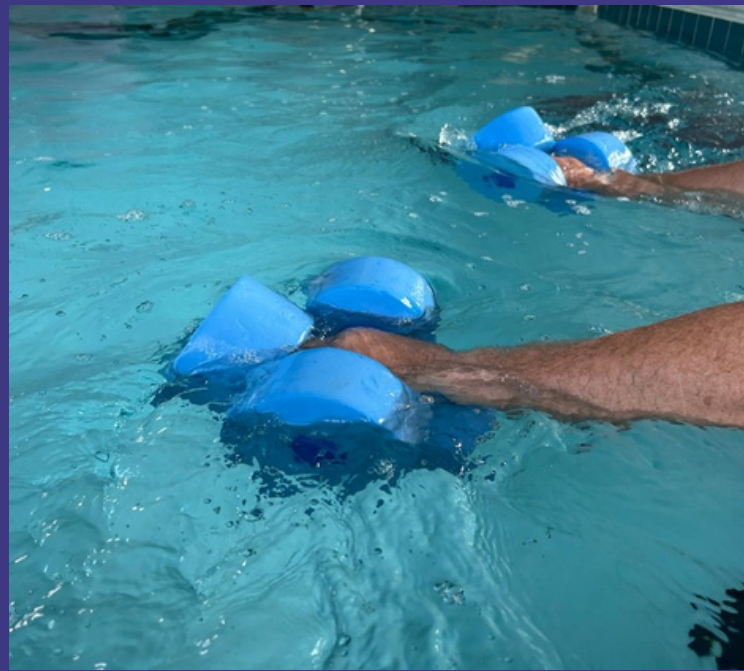
This nomination recognises the expert care, specialist therapies and ongoing support our team provide to our members.

From physiotherapy and aquatic therapy to gym classes, counselling and tailored rehabilitation programmes, we help people living with multiple sclerosis (MS), Parkinson's and the effects of stroke to maintain independence, improve wellbeing and achieve their personal goals.

As a charity, we are committed to ensuring that people can access the support they need long after diagnosis, helping them live well and stay active within their communities.

We are incredibly proud of our staff, therapists, volunteers, trustees and supporters whose dedication makes this work possible every day.

Thank you to the Kent Charity Awards judges for recognising the impact of our work, and congratulations to all the other finalists.



Kent Charity Awards 2026

Finalist

Disability Charity of the Year



Championing neurological care in Kent



L-R: CEO Heidi Coleman, Lord Mayor of Canterbury, Cllr Alister Brady and Lady Mayoress, Dr Magali-Fleur Barnoux

Kent Neuro Therapy Centre has been chosen as the Lord Mayor of Canterbury's Charity of the Year for this civic year.

To mark the beginning of this partnership, we were pleased to welcome the Lord Mayor Cllr Alister Brady and Lady Mayoress Dr Magali-Fleur Barnoux to the Centre for a tour of our facilities. During their visit, they met members, spoke with our therapists, staff and volunteers, and saw a range of specialist therapies and exercise sessions in action.

The leadership team at Kent Neuro Therapy Centre was pleased to welcome our **local MP, Rosie Duffield**, on Thursday 23 April.

The visit was an opportunity to share the Centre's progress since her last visit in 2022, including our transition to Kent Neuro Therapy Centre and the growth in membership. We also discussed the vital role charities play in supporting the NHS and strengthening community-based care.

Rosie was particularly interested in our local events and partnerships with community groups and businesses.



L-R: CEO Heidi Coleman, Head of Income Generation Nancy Reed, Clinical Lead Neuro Physiotherapist Hazel Wallis, Rosie Duffield MP

"My journey at Kent Neuro Therapy Centre has been life-changing.

"I have received outstanding care from the team, and I am deeply grateful for every part of my rehabilitation.

"Physiotherapy, gym sessions, hydrotherapy, and massage have all played an important role in helping me regain strength, balance, and confidence. Thanks to this support, I have been able to achieve things that once seemed impossible, including cycling again and playing badminton."

VIKTORIIA, WHO LIVES WITH MS, SHARES HER JOURNEY



"However, looking back, I have realised that my progress has not been the result of rehabilitation alone.

"One of the greatest reasons I have been able to maintain my independence has been the encouragement of my family. For eleven years, I had not ridden a bicycle, and I truly doubted I ever would again. My sister refused to let me give up. She encouraged me to try, even when I was convinced it was impossible. Because of her encouragement, I got back on the bike - and to my surprise, I was able to balance and ride independently. That moment reminded me that sometimes we are capable of much more than we think we can.

"Another source of strength has been my faith. Living with a condition that currently has no cure can easily take away hope, but my faith in God has given me a different perspective. I believe that Jesus is stronger than any diagnosis, and that belief fills me with hope, courage, and determination. It is this hope that helps me stay positive, keep working hard, and continue moving forward every day.

"My experience has taught me that recovery is not only about physical treatment. It is also about the people who encourage you, the hope and faith that keep you going, and the determination to keep taking the next step, no matter how small."

"I am incredibly thankful to Kent Neuro Therapy Centre, to my family, and to everyone who has supported me on this journey. I hope my story encourages others to keep believing that progress is possible, even when it seems out of reach."

L-R: Senior Clinical Fitness Specialist, Vanessa Duarte, Viktoriia Hrytsenko

More ways to access expert physiotherapy

As demand for our physiotherapy and hydrotherapy services continues to grow, we are committed to helping as many members as possible access the expert support they need.

Our physiotherapy team has expanded our programme of **specialist group sessions**, providing more opportunities to benefit from targeted, therapist-led rehabilitation in a supportive environment. Your physio can guide you to which groups would be most suitable for you. The classes offer an excellent way to continue working towards your goals while staying active and connected.

Each session is led by our experienced clinical team and has been designed to focus on specific areas such as strength, balance, mobility and upper limb function. Many members also value the encouragement and motivation that comes from exercising alongside others with shared experiences.

To the right, you'll find more information about each of our specialist group sessions and how they can support your rehabilitation journey.

**To book sessions, contact
Reception on 01227 470876**

Aqua circuits

Led by Danni and Jane

These classes are designed to offer neuro members a fun, supportive way to improve fitness, mobility, balance and confidence.

Taking place in our warm hydrotherapy pool, the classes use interval-based exercises, alternating short periods of activity with rest.

Every exercise can be adapted to suit individual abilities and goals, ensuring members are appropriately challenged while feeling safe and supported throughout the session.

Tuesdays

9am - stroke/spinal

10am - MS

11am - Parkinson's



Gym circuits

Led by Danni and Vanessa

Interval-based circuit training combining short bursts of activity with rest to improve strength, balance and cardiovascular fitness.

Mondays

9-9.45am - standing

Thursdays

1.30-2.15pm - beginner seated

2.15-3pm - advanced seated

Balance warrior

Led by Emily/Katie and Vanessa

Structured, progressive group exercise class designed to maintain mobility, reduce fall risk and improve balance and posture.

If you are mobile and able to stand with some support and walk short distances, this group is for you.

Mondays

11.30am-12.15pm

Thursdays

10.30am-11.15am

Upper limb rehab group

Led by Hazel and Jane

In our upper limb rehab group, members who have experienced a stroke work on a wide range of exercises designed to improve their arm function.

Fridays

9-10am - advanced

10.15am-11.15am - rehab

Regulate & rhythm

Led by Vanessa

This inclusive seated class combines gentle movement, breathing techniques and mindful relaxation in a welcoming, supportive environment.

No dance experience needed – just come along and enjoy moving at your own pace

Fridays

2.30pm-3.15pm

INFORMATION AND SUPPORT

Stroke Friendship Café

Our monthly Stroke Friendship Café takes place on the second Wednesday of each month from 10am–11am at Kent Neuro Therapy Centre. The session is led by a member of our physio team and often has guest speakers. Free to attend, no need to book. Come along and share your experiences.

Disability Assist drop in sessions

Need advice about living with a disability?

We host Disability Assist at the Centre every six weeks. Tuesday 15 September, 10am–12pm

They offer free information, advice and guidance on a wide range of topics, including wheelchair aids, PIP, Blue Badge and more.

Table tennis social club

Mondays from 10.30am

Open to everyone. Enjoy a fun, sociable session that supports coordination, concentration and movement, with guidance from our physiotherapy team.

Free • No booking required • All equipment provided.



Staying cool in hot weather

Many people living with MS, Parkinson's or those who have had a stroke find that hot weather can temporarily make symptoms worse. As body temperature rises, fatigue, weakness, balance or mobility can become more challenging. These effects usually improve once the body has cooled down.

Further information

For more advice, visit:

- [MS-UK: How to keep cool with MS](#)
- [MS Society: Managing the effects of temperature](#)
- [Parkinson's UK: Keeping cool in hot weather](#)
- [Stroke Association: Staying safe in summer heat](#)



Top tips for keeping cool

Drink plenty of water throughout the day.



Close curtains, blinds and windows during the hottest part of the day to help keep your home cool.



Use a fan if possible and consider cooling towels, cooling scarves or cool packs.



Wear loose-fitting, lightweight clothing made from breathable fabrics.



Take a cool shower, bath or even a cool foot bath.

Welcome to the team

Please join us in welcoming three new members of staff
to our Kent Neuro team

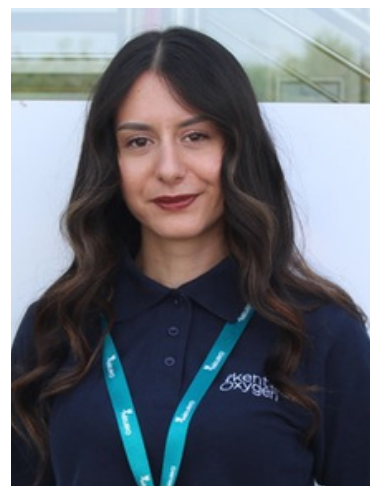


Jane Watson - Physio Assistant

I contribute by supporting members with neurological conditions through a person-centered and compassionate approach. You will find me in the gym Tuesday and Wednesday afternoons running 1:1 sessions focusing on upper limb, in aqua circuits Tuesday mornings and 1:1 aquatic physiotherapy Friday afternoons. I have six years of experience working in neuro rehabilitation, helping individuals improve functional abilities, and achieve meaningful goals. I bring strong communication skills, patience, and a genuine commitment to enhancing each individual's experience. I value the relationships built with members - seeing their progress, resilience, and determination is truly inspiring. Outside of work, I enjoy spending time staying active by lifting weights and going for long walks, as well as relaxing with friends and family.

Pavleta Yanakieva - Oxygen Therapy Assistant/Receptionist

I joined Kent Oxygen Therapy in 2026 as an Oxygen Operator, supporting clients throughout their oxygen therapy sessions. I also support reception at Kent Neuro Therapy Centre and contribute to Kent Oxygen Therapy's communications and marketing. From the moment I first walked into the Centre, I felt at home. The welcoming atmosphere and shared commitment to improving people's health and wellbeing made it feel like the perfect place to be. Before joining the team, I designed the rebrand for Kent Neuro Therapy Centre, creating its visual identity and brand guidelines. I enjoy using creativity to make healthcare information engaging, accessible and human. Outside of work, I'm passionate about design, psychology and neuroscience, and enjoy hiking, cycling, practising yoga, exploring sound and sensory experiences, and caring for my growing collection of plants.



Andy Mackinnon - Caretaker and Facilities Coordinator

I bring a wealth of experience in health and safety, facilities maintenance and grounds maintenance, and I enjoy taking a practical, proactive approach to keeping the Centre safe, welcoming and well maintained for everyone who visits. If you notice anything around the building that needs fixing or attention, please do come and have a chat with me. My regular working hours are 7.45am to 1.45pm, with flexibility where needed. Outside of work, I enjoy any sport involving a bat and ball, particularly tennis, padel, cricket and golf.

Remembering someone special

When someone dies, finding meaningful ways to remember them can bring comfort, connection and a lasting way to celebrate their life. At Kent Neuro Therapy Centre, we're honoured to support families in remembering loved ones through MuchLoved Tribute Pages, our Butterfly Board and by helping people fundraise in memory through personal challenges and events.

After the death of her husband Tony, a much-loved member of the Centre, Kathryn and her family found comfort in the ways his memory continues to be honoured.

The Centre created a MuchLoved Tribute Page, giving family and friends a place to share memories, light virtual candles and celebrate Tony's life. For his grandchildren, it became a safe place to write messages to their Grandad.

Tony is also remembered on our Butterfly Board, a quiet place to pause and reflect and through a memorial bird table that his family still visit to feed the birds in his honour.

"The Centre has shown us compassion without needing to be asked, kindness without conditions, and support without expectation. Their support has made a difficult time just a little more bearable, and that is something we will never forget."



Kathryn and Tony

"It helped us feel less alone"

Rainham Community Choir recently held a concert in memory of Tony, raising over £1,400 for our charity. Thank you, all!

Climbing Snowdon in Steve's memory

Steve Sall was a member of our Centre who had MS. He was known for his humour and would often joke that he was "climbing a mountain" whenever anyone asked how he was, despite the challenges MS brought.

Inspired by that spirit, eight of his family and friends decided to climb Mount Snowdon together and raised more than £7,000 to help other people access expert care and specialist therapies at the Centre.



Whether you'd like to make a simple dedication or organise a fundraising challenge, we're here to help. Please reach out to our fundraising team on fundraising@kentneuro.org or 07768 564866

Kent Neuro Therapy Centre selected to support national MS fatigue research

We are proud to be **one of just four organisations across the UK selected as a data collection site** for the REFUEL-MS clinical trial and the only non-NHS provider involved. Led by King's College London and funded by the MS Society and the National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR), the 5.5-year research programme aims to improve how fatigue is managed for people living with multiple sclerosis.

Fatigue is one of the most common and challenging symptoms of MS, affecting around 90% of people living with the condition. Unlike everyday tiredness, MS fatigue can have a significant impact on work, family life, social activities and independence. Despite this, relatively few people are currently offered evidence-based treatments to help manage it.

REFUEL-MS has been developed to address this gap through a personalised digital programme that combines evidence-based cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT), physical activity and balance techniques. Delivered through an app on a smartphone or tablet, the programme is designed to help people better understand their fatigue, develop practical strategies to manage it and build sustainable routines that fit around everyday life. Participants are supported throughout by trained healthcare professionals.





The trial will launch this autumn, with 20 of our members living with MS taking part. Over 16 weeks, participants will complete weekly app-based sessions while receiving support from our Clinical Lead Neuro Physiotherapist and another member of our physiotherapy team.

Being chosen for this study is a significant milestone for Kent Neuro Therapy Centre. Alongside three NHS Trusts, we will play an important role in collecting data that could help shape the future of MS fatigue management across the UK. It is also recognition of the expertise of our clinical team and the high-quality care and support we provide every day.

If the trial demonstrates positive results, researchers hope REFUEL-MS could become part of routine NHS care, making effective fatigue management more accessible to thousands of people living with MS in the future.

We are delighted that our members have the opportunity to contribute to research that has the potential to improve lives far beyond our own community.

For more information about the study visit
www.refuel-ms.com

Investing in your Centre

We're continuing to enhance our gym to upgrade the existing fabric and equipment and give focused support for our members. Recent gym equipment funding includes £30,000 from Swire Foundation, £16,000 from Fidelity Fund, new flooring funded by Screwfix and air conditioning from The Clothworkers' Foundation (£10,600). We also received £15,000 from Sport England to support our gym staff salaries for our new classes. A treatment plinth was funded by Graveney Court Lodge Masons and has enabled a new treatment room to be created upstairs. Recently awarded unrestricted grants of £60,000 from Frank Brake Charitable Trust and £35,000 from the Garfield Weston Foundation will help us with our core costs. We have been awarded £15,000 from William Brake Foundation which will go towards adaptations to one of the hydrotherapy pool changing rooms.



Garfield Weston
FOUNDATION



GET INVOLVED



Coffee mornings

Last Saturday of the month 10am-12pm

Join us for a relaxed coffee morning in our social area. Refreshments include bacon rolls and homemade cakes. Our charity shop will be open. Free to attend. Fully accessible building with parking.



Summer Fayre

Saturday 15 August 9am-1pm

One for our community! Join us here at the Centre for craft stalls, charity shop bargains, a raffle, tombolas, games and refreshments. Free to enter.

Please note there will be no coffee morning in August.



Challenge

There's something to suit everyone

If you're a keen runner, walker, adrenaline junkie or looking for something unique. We have access to a wide range of popular events or can help you create your own challenge.



Westgate Golf Day

Friday 2 October Canterbury Golf Club

Our popular annual event is open for bookings. Enjoy a bacon roll, 18 holes, a one-course dinner, auction and raffle. Fourballs are £240.



Christmas Ball

Saturday 5 December University of Kent

Celebrate the festive season in style at our Ball - tickets (£72pp) include a 3-course meal, live music, hosted by Dave Fulton and much more!



Get in touch

Need some help planning your own fundraising idea? Our fundraising team - Nancy, Mia, Marilyn and Sally - are here to give tips and advice.

Contact the fundraising team

fundraising@kentneuro.org or 07768 564866



Jane, our physiotherapy assistant with Jon

Before his stroke, Jon enjoyed a busy and active life. He worked on building boats and in carpentry and spent much of his free time outdoors; gardening, sailing and bee keeping. He also enjoyed practical work using machinery such as chainsaws and strimmers.

Everything changed when Jon had a stroke just over a year ago, aged 62. The stroke affected both his speech and mobility, with his right side most impacted. He left hospital using a wheelchair and could only walk very short distances.

“I suffered with depression as well,” Jon says.

Despite the challenges, Jon was determined to regain as much independence as possible. When he joined Kent Neuro Therapy Centre in December 2025, he was motivated to improve the movement in his right arm and leg, build strength and “live life as well as I can”. Determination has been at the centre of Jon’s recovery journey.

JON’S STORY

After starting physiotherapy in hospital, Jon continued his rehabilitation at the Centre through physiotherapy, gym sessions and hydrotherapy - something he especially enjoys because of his love of the water and swimming.

“I’m getting stronger and stronger since having my stroke,” he says.

Jon has noticed improvements in his balance, strength and mobility since attending the Centre. Hydrotherapy in particular has become an important part of his rehabilitation.

“I find hydrotherapy relaxing and tiring at the same time,” he says.

His speech has also improved significantly, allowing him to share his experience with us using his own words.

One of the milestones Jon is most proud of is no longer needing to use his wheelchair.

“Especially not after a very bumpy ride with my son on the cobbles in Canterbury High Street,” he laughs.

Jon credits the Centre’s physiotherapy team with helping him stay motivated and focused on his recovery.

“They motivate me to work harder and harder every visit.”

He says concentrating fully on his exercises during sessions has helped him continue making progress week by week.

Jon’s next goal is improving movement in his right arm, which remains extremely limited.

While he currently receives no NHS support for this, the Centre’s physiotherapy team plans to support him through dedicated one-to-one sessions, with the hope that he will later join the Centre’s upper limb rehabilitation group for people recovering from stroke.

Jon would recommend our Centre to those recovering from a stroke and advises to ‘take it as it comes. Wake up every day and be determined.’



Mat based yoga with Bernie

This class is specially adapted for people living with MS, Parkinson's and stroke, providing a safe and supportive environment to improve flexibility, strength and balance.

Led by an experienced instructor, each session combines gentle movement, stretching and breathing techniques to help improve posture, mobility and overall wellbeing.

Come and join the session to build confidence and move at your own pace.

Wednesday - 2pm
Book on 01227 470876



**Expert care and therapies empowering those
living with MS, Parkinson's and stroke.**



Kent Neuro Therapy Centre, Bradbury House,
Merton Lane North, Canterbury, CT4 7DZ



01227 470876



info@kentneuro.org



www.kentneuro.org

Visit our website by scanning the QR code



Registered with
**FUNDRAISING
REGULATOR**



Registered charity no. 801382
Registered company no. 2339750