



FIBROMYALGIA SUPPORT GROUP FOR SURREY AND SUSSEX

17 July 2009

The Future of FMSSAS

Following the publication in Fibromyalgia Focus of the article under the above heading, enquiries have been received from which it seems that some members believe it is the intention of the trustees to close FMSSAS. Whether or not this is a misunderstanding of the article or the result of rumours is not clear.

Accordingly, this message is being issued to state clearly that the objective of the trustees is to consult with members on the future direction of the group. The consultation process is in four parts:

- 1 the afore-mentioned article in Fibromyalgia Focus;
- 2 consultation meetings at the roadshow in Horsham, Long Ditton and Worthing. Opinions, suggestions etc from members who cannot attend one or more of the meetings are equally valuable;
- 3 consideration by the trustees of everything gleaned from the roadshows, including, particularly, positive proposals from members for development of local activities. Some of these are already coming in;
- 4 report back to members for further consultation.

Because of holidays the target for reporting back is mid-September, with perhaps further meetings around the AGM.

Activities such as the yoga and swimming exercises advertised in Fibromyalgia Focus are not affected. These have been negotiated by or on behalf of the group and run independently without any need for management from the centre.

Please re-read the article carefully and make your contribution to the debate on the future direction of FMSSAS

FMSSAS Office and Helpline

Earlier this month, Janet Boniface was faced with a personal family crisis which demanded her complete attention. She had to withdraw from management of the office at Lavinia House and the FMSSAS Helpline. It is not known when she would be able to return. Janet was not only managing the office and Helpline but substantially manning both full-time with assistance from a small band of volunteers. There was no one who could step in and take over immediately on what could be a long term basis. Accordingly, immediate actions were required, and which are described in the following paragraphs. Overall responsibility for Janet's functions has been taken on by Tony Ede temporarily. Janet remains a trustee.

Office: this was due to be closed by the end of July for financial and human resource reasons. Tony has travelled from Worthing to Horsham three times over a period of two weeks, meeting Frances Bryan and Janet at the office for the purpose of clearing and transferring files and folders. Equipment, office files and folders etc have been placed in storage which has been made available to us free for a period of time. The physical office at Lavinia House is now closed and has been handed back to Horsham District Age Concern.

For the time being, Tony Ede will maintain office correspondence and services from his home. Instructions have been given for re-direction of mail to 42 Gaisford Road, Worthing BN14 7HW. All e-mail traffic to office@fms-sas.co.uk and secretary@fms-sas.co.uk has been diverted to a new e-mail account Tony has opened with his Internet Service Provider at no cost to FMSSAS. Telephone callers to the office number 01403 751308 are advised to e-mail or if this is not possible to telephone Tony at home on 01903 602809.

FMSSAS Helpline: currently this is kindly being maintained by Patsy Baker, using the rota for July 2009. The future of this service remains under review as it does require significant long term commitment from an experienced Helpline responder. There is also a technical difficulty related to taking messages from callers to the Helpline when it is in use on another call and this is being addressed.

The actions set out above are considered to be a proportionate response to events. Human resources for responsibility and management are finite. However, it is expected that the emergency actions taken will enable us to hold the fort until the consultation process on the future of our group have been completed in an orderly fashion.