

2016 NEWSLETTER

It is exactly a year since we established the BRCA Kent Support Group. Over the last 12 months, we have seen our membership increase to 70 ladies, which is an amazing number! Thank you for all your contributions; the kind words of encouragement and support, all the tips and suggestions on having surgery and making life-changing decisions. Thank you to Jo for her wonderful work on our Facebook Group and Website, and to KIMS for hosting our monthly meetings and Awareness Days. I also want to thank Lee's husband for his amazing donations, and all the other generous people who have donated to our group. This money will greatly help us to move forward in supporting more women and to increase awareness in our community. I am very grateful to Anne Henderson for all her help and advice on HRT, and particularly want to thank Suzannah Fitzgerald. Suzannah has contributed an incredible amount of time to our group and has given so much support to us all. Trevor (Suzannah's husband) of Fitzgerald Jewellers of Canterbury, has very kindly sponsored our group by paying for various items of merchandise (will be arriving in the New Year) – thank you Trevor!

I wish to highlight a few of our achievements from 2016, to show you just how far we have come:-

- 9 meetings have been organised during 2016, with an average of 14 women attending each
- Been successful with our Macmillan 'start-up' grant application
- Have linked up directly to the following websites advertising and highlighting our group; Macmillan Cancer, Target Ovarian Cancer, Ovacom, The Menopause Society and Dr Russell Burcombe's website
- Organised and presented with Anne Henderson, Hayley Wright, Karen Sallnow and Sarah Potter at this year's BRCA Awareness Day for 55 GP's and healthcare professionals
- Attended a GP Meeting with Anne to promote the group and highlight HRT clinic requirements
- Visited and distributed BRCA Kent leaflets and business cards to 14 hospitals/oncology centres
- Assisted Wendy Dhillon in setting-up BRCA Brighton
- Produced information packs for new members of the group
- Created a library of information from leading charities
- Produced a feedback form for members
- Ordered merchandise (tote bags, mugs, etc).

What we have planned for 2017

- Confirmed dates for 10 support group meetings at KIMS for 2017 (please see Website and Facebook Group for dates)
- John Lewis Bra Fitting at Bluewater (2nd March – 6.00-7.00 pm)
- Confirmed Anita Ralph (Herbalist) to speak at our March support group (27th)
- Breast Reconstruction Nurses from East Grinstead to attend our May support group (22nd)
- Continue to encourage our BRCA Buddy system to grow – matching-up members and supporting on a one-to-one basis where needed
- Form a Committee – this has been on hold for the past few months (many apologies)! This will be priority over the first few months of 2017 to establish a Committee for the group
- Organising 10 meeting dates at a venue in Canterbury for our East Kent members.

Wishing you and your families a very happy and healthy Christmas and New Year and thinking of all our loved ones we have lost, but never forgotten.