



# Breast Friends *York*

*Newsletter – Edition 1*

## ABOUT US

Breast Friends York was set up in April 2014, in response to a lack of non-medical based support for patients with a breast cancer diagnosis in the York area. Our two co-founders, Rachel and Zoe have worked hard to fulfil a much-needed gap in cancer services. They both gained amazing support from an online forum and Rachel was Zoe's face-to-face support after Zoe received her diagnosis just 14 months after Rachel's own diagnosis. They both realised the importance of the peer support they received and that they were in a position to provide support for others in the same situation.

The aim is to provide a safe, supportive environment in which women with a breast cancer diagnosis can support each other, through cancer and through life. Our monthly meetings are determined by the needs of the women currently attending the group and therefore no two meetings will be the same. One month we could be chatting whilst drinking coffee and eating cake (a common theme throughout our groups) and the next we could be doing a hula hoop session!

Our members have found that it is possible to talk to people with cancer in a way that is almost impossible with family and friends and so the group provides a valuable support mechanism where connections are forged and lifelong friendships are made. Come and join us at one of our meetings or if a group situation is not your thing we can arrange a 1-to-1 coffee meeting where you can chat in a more private environment and get to know at least 1 member of our group.

### *Our Board of Trustees:*

Zoe Bounds - Chair  
Rachel Bruce – Vice Chair  
Barbara Griffin - Secretary  
Tracie Gledhill – Treasurer, Social Media, Website  
Lynne Rowe - Events  
Carole Bishop - Buddying and Befriending  
Karen Jackson  
Susie Young



ZOE AND RACHEL  
Co-founders of Breast  
Friends York



*Left to right: Back row - Susie Young, Lynne Rowe, Rachel Bruce, Karen Jackson.  
Front row - Zoe Bounds and Barbara Griffin.*

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### OCTOBER 2017

#### Supportive Sewers Pillow and Drain Bag Workshop\*

**Friday 6<sup>th</sup>  
10am-2pm**

The Viking Loom,  
Wigginton Road,  
York YO32 2RH

Sewers and non-sewers  
welcome to join our  
friendly group. We  
make heart shaped  
pillows and drain bags  
for use after surgery.

#### Evening Meeting\*

**Thursday 12<sup>th</sup>  
7pm-9pm**

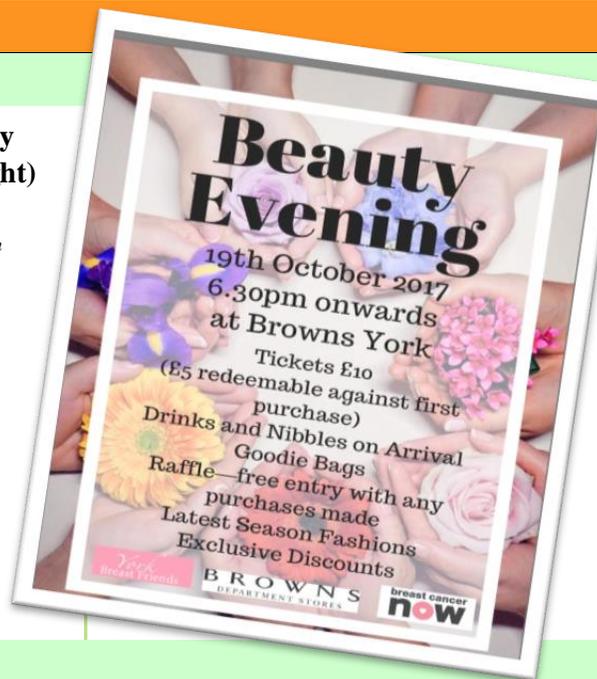
Pig&Pastry,  
Bishopthorpe Road,  
York YO23 1NA

Come and join us at the  
Pig & Pastry for free  
coffee, cake and chat.  
Andy Wilson from  
Yorkshire Cancer  
Research will be visiting  
to talk about the work  
they do.

#### Browns Beauty Evening (see right)

**Thursday 19<sup>th</sup>  
6.30pm-9pm**

*Tickets available  
from Breast  
Friends York,  
Browns York or  
Breast Cancer  
Now.*



### NOVEMBER 2017

#### Batik Sale by Local Artist Rebecca Mason

**Friday 3<sup>rd</sup>  
5.30pm-8.30pm  
&  
Saturday 4<sup>th</sup>  
10am-5pm**

Bar Lane Studios, 1 Bar  
Lane, York YO1 6JU

Proceeds will be donated to  
Breast Friends York.

#### Evening Meeting\*

**Thursday 9<sup>th</sup>  
7pm-9pm**

Pig&Pastry,  
Bishopthorpe Road,  
York YO23 1NA

Come and join us at the Pig  
& Pastry for free coffee,  
cake and chat.

#### Supportive Sewers Pillow and Drain Bag Workshop\*

**Friday 6<sup>th</sup>  
10am-2pm**

The Viking Loom,  
Wigginton Road, York  
YO32 2RH

Sewers and non-sewers  
welcome to join our friendly  
group. We make heart  
shaped pillows and drain  
bags for use after surgery.

#### Yorkshire Cancer Research – Life with Cancer Event\*\*

**Thursday 16 November 10-2pm**

Harrogate Convention Centre, King's Rd,  
Harrogate HG1 5LA

*To book your place  
email:*

[bookings@ycr.org.uk](mailto:bookings@ycr.org.uk)

*\*\*This is not a BFY event but we will be there.*

### DECEMBER 2017

#### Supportive Sewers Pillow and Drain Bag Workshop\*

**Friday 1<sup>st</sup>  
10am-2pm**

The Viking Loom,  
Wigginton Road, York  
YO32 2RH

Sewers and non-sewers  
welcome to join our  
friendly group. We make  
heart shaped pillows and  
drain bags for use after  
surgery.

#### Evening Meeting\*

**Thursday 14<sup>th</sup>  
7pm-9pm**

Pig&Pastry,  
Bishopthorpe Road,  
York YO23 1NA

Come and join us at the Pig  
& Pastry for free coffee,  
cake and chat.

### JANUARY 2018

#### Supportive Sewers Pillow and Drain Bag Workshop\*

**Saturday 6<sup>th</sup>  
10am-2pm**

The Viking Loom,  
Wigginton Road, York  
YO32 2RH

Sewers and non-sewers  
welcome to join our friendly  
group. We make heart  
shaped pillows and drain  
bags for use after surgery.

#### Evening Meeting\*

**Thursday 11<sup>th</sup>  
7pm-9pm**

Pig&Pastry,  
Bishopthorpe  
Road,  
York YO23 1NA

Come and join us at  
the Pig & Pastry for  
free coffee, cake  
and chat.

#### Post Surgery Lingerie Evening

**Monday 29<sup>th</sup>  
7pm-9pm**

Marriot Hotel,  
Tadcaster Road, York  
YO24 1QQ

The Bra Clinic provide  
an excellent service  
and bring a whole  
range of underwear,  
swimwear and  
sleepwear made  
especially for ladies  
who have had breast  
surgery.

*\*Newcomers are welcome but numbers are needed in advance so please call or email if you wish to attend any of these events.*

## MY EXPERIENCE

### The Cold Cap

Like most people being told they have to have chemotherapy, I thought it meant losing all my hair. However, when having my appointment with the chemo nurse she introduced me to the cold cap. Baring a striking resemblance to some bright pink medieval torture swim cap attached to a cooler, super-cooled liquid is pumped through tubes in the cap. The idea is to freeze your hair follicles so the chemo drugs don't zap them. Like many women losing my hair during chemo was a big worry, so I thought I would give the cold cap a whirl.

In the days leading up to my first chemo and cold cap session, I watched the podcasts Victoria Derbyshire had put on YouTube of her journey through chemo. It didn't look too bad so I was quite optimistic when I arrived for my first session. I have to say nothing had prepared me for the experience. If you can imagine the coldest ice cream brain freeze you have ever had and probably treble it, that comes close. It took all my willpower to stick with it, but if you can get through the first 15 minutes, you adjust and it does ease off (mainly because your head is so blooming cold it can't feel anything).

Depending on the chemo drugs you have decides how long you wear the cold cap for, both before and after treatment. It can make it a long day but by the end I was quite prepared. Some useful tips if you decide to try the cold cap:

- ❖ Take lots to do as this helps distract you and the cold doesn't seem so bad.
- ❖ Bring lots of layers you can add or wrap over you.
- ❖ Hand warmers are great for keeping you toasty.
- ❖ Bring a hat for after, as your hair will be wet.

You will probably still lose hair even though you have used the cold cap. I lost quite a lot of the thickness of my hair but kept a good covering so for me it was the right choice.

*Kath H, diagnosed January 2016*



Cold Cap Close-up



Cold Cap in Action



Cold Cap Refrigerator Unit



Kath with her new curls summer 2017

## OUT AND ABOUT

### Cancer Research UK Race for Life

On Sunday 9 July we attended the Cancer Research UK Race for Life event at York Racecourse with our Breast Friends York tent. Zoe and Tracie were invited up on stage by Minster FM to talk about Breast Friends York, their work with CoppafFeel and generally about being breast aware.



Zoe, Tracie and Barbara were there handing out information about Breast Friends York and talked to a lady who had recently received one of our post surgery pillows, given to her at York Hospital. She came to thank us and have a general chat as she had only recently been diagnosed.



### Hula Hooping

As a fun activity and a chance to learn something new, Rachel our Vice Chair suggested a hula hooping workshop!

Jenny from High Hoops, York met us at the Poppleton Centre at 7pm on 27<sup>th</sup> July and ran an introductory hula hooping workshop for us. We enjoyed it so much that we didn't want to stop after the hour was up and we carried on for some time afterwards! A few of us even had a bit of energy left for a few drinks in the Poppleton Centre bar afterwards.



## PRAISE OUR PARTNERS

In this section we want to highlight and give thanks to those companies, organisations and people who have supported us with their time, generosity, kindness and general support of our cause.

The Pig & Pastry has been supporting us since the beginning and our thanks couldn't be big enough if we wrote it in the sky. By day, this unique deli/eatery, situated in the hub of the Bishy Rd community is the "in" place to be for business meetings, mummy meet-ups, friendly gatherings or just to pig out. The atmosphere is friendly; the service is top notch and the menu deliciously quirky (try the chorizo and eggs on sourdough bread for brunch or the 'Corbyn' for lunch). Hungry yet?

The true beauty of this place is that they actually act upon their status as a café in the heart of its community by opening up their doors once a month for us to have our evening meetings. If you are passing you may see the lights on and the door is most likely to be open and you will see us drinking coffee and eating delicious cake – fat free of course, or so they have been promising us for the last 4 years! The staff open up for us in their spare time and for free. How amazing is that! So, if you are a 'priority local' kind of person and want to reward those who are community generous, please do stop by and treat yourself to something scrummy and give Julia and the team a big thank you on behalf of York Breast Friends.

## MEMBERS' STORIES

### *Vice-Chair Rachel talks about her story and ongoing issues with fatigue:*

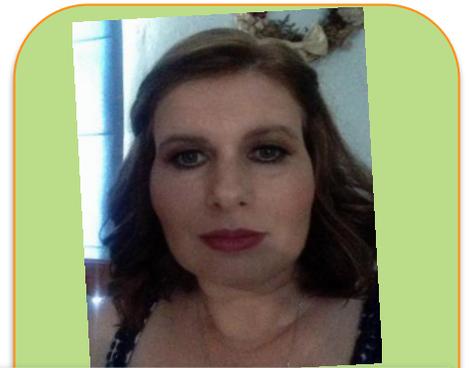
I was diagnosed with breast cancer 5 years ago, in July 2012 aged 42. I was always busy - I was a Mum of 4 children aged 15, 13, 10 and 8 and I worked part time as a primary school teacher and was a Brownie leader. I enjoyed keeping fit and Bollywood dancing. Getting diagnosed with cancer came completely out of the blue. I was scared of chemo but tried to grit my teeth and get through treatment. I had a sentinel node biopsy then a mastectomy with an expander reconstruction followed by six sessions of EC-T chemo. Finally I had 15 sessions of radiotherapy and am on Tamoxifen for 10 years.

At the end of treatment I was struggling. I'd had a couple of incidents where I ended up in hospital and I was anaemic so became breathless walking the kids to school. I accessed complementary therapies at the Haven, which really helped and built up my walking. I managed to get back to work and felt like I was recovering. A year after finishing treatment I got a cold. I tried to keep working but became increasingly unwell. I wasn't sleeping, I was dizzy, found noise overwhelming and was tearful. Not good when trying to teach lively 10 year olds! My GP offered antidepressants but I didn't think I was depressed. The Haven helped again but travelling to Leeds was counterproductive.

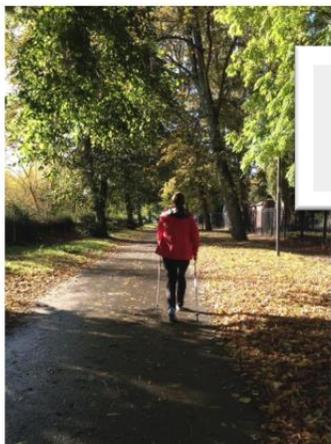
Eventually I contacted the Yorkshire Fatigue Clinic and got a referral there. Finally I had found someone who listened and understood how I was feeling. I was diagnosed with cancer-related fatigue. I was given strategies to help plan my activities, pace myself and prioritise what I did. We looked at activities that energised me and I accepted that I had to put myself first and stop volunteering as much. I took a lot of help from the onco-psychologist to adjust to life with fatigue. Recovery has been long and slow. Every time I get a cold it knocks me back and I end up off work again then build up again slowly.

I've stopped being a Brownie leader and my Bollywood dancing but have joined a choir instead. I can sit down to do that if necessary and the singing energises me. I've started Nordic walking as it doesn't matter if I miss a week when energy levels are low and being outside in the fresh air is good for me. I've learned to crochet so I feel productive even when I'm sitting resting.

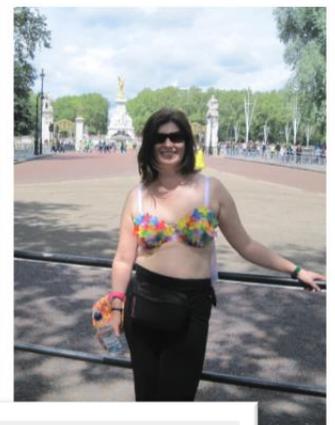
Life is different, but still good. I'm not where I thought I'd be 5 years after diagnosis but that's ok. I've learned to live life to the full in a different way.



RACHEL BRUCE



Nordic walking outside helps my energy levels.



A week before I was diagnosed, doing a half marathon walk for breast cancer!

## FRIENDS OF BREAST FRIENDS YORK

**We have not done all of this alone. We have had the help and support of some amazingly kind and generous people and organisations, without whom we would not be able to exist.**

On this page we would like to thank you for being our 'friends'.

Our thanks go out to:

- ❖ York Against Cancer
- ❖ Caroline Shead and Lynda Duff from Macmillan
- ❖ Jill Long from the Yorkshire Cancer Patient Forum
- ❖ The Pig&Pastry, Bishopthorpe Road, York
- ❖ Staff at Gulp & Graze, Micklegate, York
- ❖ The Viking Loom, Wigginton Road, York
- ❖ York Press
- ❖ Country Baskets, Leeds
- ❖ Andrea Dennis of Pink Lily Photography
- ❖ Sue Cooper at Nicola Jane

Nic Barella of Pure Aperture Photography

## SUPPORT US



Fancy a challenge? Are you great at cycling, running, climbing or something a little more daring?

Sign up to Localgiving and pledge your donations to us or to simply make a donation go to:

[localgiving.com/breastfriendsyork](http://localgiving.com/breastfriendsyork)



Do you shop online? Do it through [easyfundraising .org.uk](http://easyfundraising.org.uk) and raise a free donation for us every time you shop online. No cost, no catch.

[easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/breastfriendsyork](http://easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/breastfriendsyork)

## CONTACT US

*For more information or an informal chat please don't hesitate to contact us:*

**TEL: 07516 066599**



[info@yorkbreastfriends.org](mailto:info@yorkbreastfriends.org)



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