

NEWSLETTER

Keeping you up to date with News and Events



Thank you, Alice

Very few people can remember Dyscover without Alice Owen, who joined us 18 years ago. One of those people is Gill Jackson, our founder, who recalls Alice's many years of service.



Alice joined Dyscover in 2006 as an Assistant and quickly became responsible for **leading conversation groups** and organising other activities. She always showed empathy and understanding to members. Alice was a **fundamental part of the development of programmes**. All this

while bringing up three young children!

Who better then, in 2019, to take on the role of **Director of Business** and to develop more skills in fundraising, marketing and organisation management. Alice's intimate



knowledge of the uniqueness of Dyscover has enabled her to **apply for funds to support service development**. She and Rosemary made an amazing team, leading Dyscover for several years. She has made **long standing relationships with Trusts** and other funders as well as community organisations.

Alice never fails to meet targets and it is **through her hard work that we still have reserves in the bank** at the end of each year!



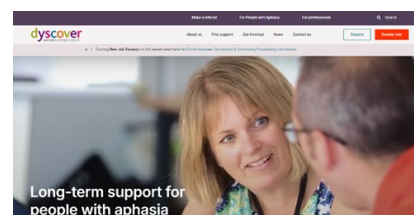
A presentation from the Wednesday and Thursday groups was just one of the farewell events for Alice.

Alice herself, says "I have had the most wonderful 18 years at Dyscover; never did I think I'd be here that long! It's been hard work but so worth it, to see and understand the impact this exceptional charity has on those we support. I've worked with some amazing colleagues, volunteers, members and families, many of them are now very special friends. It's been an absolute honour."

New Chairman

Following the sad passing of John Woollett, **Roger Young took over as Chairman** in August. He joined the Board in February 2023 and has already been closely involved in our activities. Roger's 40-year career was spent in the **insurance and financial services sectors**. His first message from the Trustees is overleaf.

Website launch



Please visit dyscover.org.uk to explore our new website. More details on Page 3.

To find out more about Dyscover

Please go to: dyscover.org.uk or contact us for details of our online visitor sessions on Zoom or to receive our regular newsletters.

Follow us on social media



to find our page on Facebook search for Dyscover



@dyscoveraphasia



@DyscoverAphasia



@dyscoveraphasiacharity

Update from the Trustees

At this time of the year, the Trustees' attention turns to the final production stages of Dyscover's Annual Report. A huge amount of work goes into ensuring we have a complete and comprehensive document which **showcases the excellent work we do at Dyscover.**



This year we were particularly struck by the list of **over 60 trusts and organisations which have donated funds** to Dyscover in the last financial year. We are also proud to report that pledges from our 30th Anniversary Campaign totalled an amazing £19,200. These are both excellent results, and we would like to thank all the various trusts, organisations and, of course, individual donors for their outstanding support, as well as our fundraising team in **building such strong relationships within our community.**

In terms of the Trustee Board, since our last newsletter we have said farewell to two Trustees, Simone Page and John Flower, and we thank them both for their contributions. We are also sad to report the departure of Alice Owen, our Director of Business. The Trustees would like to **personally thank Alice for all her hard work, expertise and wise counsel** over the years. She will undoubtedly be sorely missed by all of us, and we wish her every success in the future.

Roger Young, Chairman



Spotlight on Speech and Language Therapist Emma Hubbard

Emma was trying to decide on a career in either speech and language therapy (SLT) or occupational therapy. She spent a short period on work experience with Dyscover and was so **impressed by the benefits members gained**, that her mind was made up: SLT. Since qualifying Emma has specialised in adult neuro rehab, most recently working for 12 years at St George's Hospital, Tooting.

We have Twitter (now X) to thank for directing Emma back to Dyscover. She saw our job advertisement there and now **works two days a week with us.** She also does some independent work, providing one-to-one therapy for clients and their families.

Emma leads the two face-to-face Wednesday groups at Leatherhead and is involved, along with Julie and Suzanne, with the new online Thursday group. She is enjoying **learning new techniques for working with Zoom** and is glad to see how well online groups can work. Next term Emma is looking forward to being a practice educator for SLT students who will have placements at Dyscover.

What does Emma most enjoy about Dyscover? "Being part of something that **has a positive impact on members' lives.** Working with such a supportive network of people, the creativity and sharing of ideas."

Emma and her husband, Rob, have three young children, aged seven, four and two. "It's energetic and fun," says Emma. It can also be a bit of a marathon getting all of them ready for school and nursery before she comes to Dyscover on a Wednesday.

Around Dyscover

Website launch

After years (yes years) of work, reports Alice, we have finally launched our new look website.

The **website is our 'shop window'**. Many people don't know that we seek referrals ourselves and do not receive any automatic referrals once NHS community therapy support ceases. Therefore, **marketing Dyscover is a big task for us**. A large percentage of referrals come from people searching the internet, so it is vital that it gives an up-to-date picture of Dyscover and makes it easy for visitors to **find the information they need in just a few simple clicks**. We also aim to reach more potential volunteers and fundraisers.

Funding update from Alice

Director of Business, Alice Owen, writes:

I am working my last few weeks at Dyscover and would like to thank you all for the amazing gifts, cards and well wishes. I am very pleased to say that we have **appointed Joanna Matthews (Jo), as our Head of Fundraising**. I will be welcoming Jo and showing her the ropes in the coming weeks.

Over the Summer I am pleased to say we have had several grants towards the running of our Challenge Programme and our PPA Service. Our **hardship bursary fund is assisting an increasing number of members**, so we'll be looking for donations to top this fund up, and we are particularly keen for some corporate support.

PPA

We are grateful to Awards for All for supporting the PPA (Primary Progressive Aphasia) service over the last year. **Forty-two people have been helped with the diagnosis** and 59 family members have learned about the condition. Connecting with others in the PPA world is a big part of our work. Rosemary teamed up with Dr Anna Volkmer to run a Wellbeing themed support meeting. An outcome of the meeting was a plan to launch the **first national PPA Awareness Day** in April 2025.

Farewell Liz

We are very sorry to be saying goodbye to our **Volunteer and Community Fundraising Co-ordinator Liz**, who, after nearly five years with Dyscover, is moving onto a full-time role. Liz has managed her dual role seamlessly and been a constant motivator, with **an abundance of great ideas**. Her fun and efficiently run events have met ambitious fundraising targets. She's been **a real support to our volunteer team** and instigated many new ideas to recruit and facilitate our diversified and growing team of skilled volunteers – our backbone. We wish her the very best for the future.



Benefits all round

Service Manager and Lead Speech and Language Therapist (SLT), Julie Samuel, reports on an exciting development.

Since starting with Dyscover, I have been keen to offer **Speech and Language Therapy student placements**. Whilst working in the NHS I saw how these placements significantly benefitted students to support their theoretical learning. At Dyscover, they would also gain further understanding of the third sector and its value within the stroke rehab pathway. This **will enable students to see the long-term impact of stroke and aphasia** and how Dyscover supports our members and relatives living with aphasia.

Students bring **energy, enthusiasm and updated research knowledge** to our groups, which we welcome. We have been fortunate to be offered placement mentoring by Dr Sally McVicker, a clinical academic at City university, and **hope to enrol undergraduate students from October**. Emma and Maggie, our two Speech and Language Therapists, are attending placement educator training in September to provide them with the supervision skills required.

Groups in action

What do members think?

We are most grateful to the 30 members and 21 relatives who responded to this year's satisfaction survey. Their replies really help to guide our future services. Results were very positive.

97% of member respondents gave a 4 out of 5 or 5 out of 5 overall rating for Dyscover.

Over 90% of member respondents felt that Dyscover helped by:
supporting positive wellbeing
connecting with other people with aphasia
supporting communication of opinions to others and
optimising communication opportunities.

100% of relatives felt that that Dyscover has helped them in not feeling alone. 81% felt that we had helped with understanding aphasia, supporting a relative and creating a support network of people who understand aphasia. Relatives gave us a rating of 4.72 overall out of 5, up from the previous year at 4.45.



Using skills

Members of the Thursday PM Extend Group use a variety of **different skills to express their views**. In smaller break-out groups, members have more opportunities to talk and ask questions, supported by volunteers and staff.

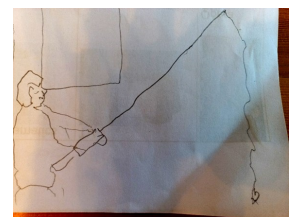
Here Cam is using his mobile phone effectively to help him share news. Marco **uses his tablet to draw images or write words** to supplement his speech. Michael makes notes on the topic reminder sheet in advance of the session, which he uses as a prompt. Ron writes single words to help him generate and say the word he is thinking of. Members often **reach for the local and international maps**, which support many different topics.



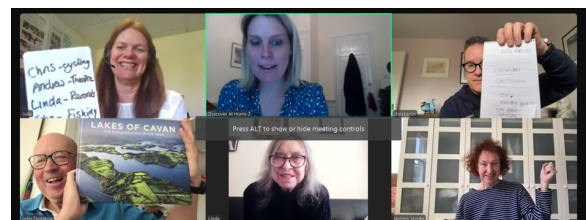
A bit like Taboo

We challenged Thursday AM Group members to describe an object in their homes. They could **use spoken words, gesture, drawing, writing**, but could not name the object - a bit like the game Taboo.

This entertaining session demonstrated how well members can use 'total communication' strategies. **Indra sketched a brilliant fishing rod** while David described in wonderful detail a grandfather clock.



Getting to know you



Last term we enjoyed getting to know members in the **new Thursday morning online group**. One of our sessions focused on each member presenting a passion and the other members **practising questions** to find out more.

Groups in action

Mottos

Our Wednesday AM group shared **mottos** they find helpful - and came up with some new ones too!

'Life isn't about waiting for the storm to pass it's about learning to dance in the rain.'

'It's not how you fall down, it's how you get up.'

'You can only eat an elephant one bite at a time.'

'Worry less.'

'Tomorrow is the beginning of the rest of your life.'

'Make the most of every day.'



Know your volunteer

Our wonderful volunteers were in the limelight in Dyscover sessions during Volunteers Week, when we asked them to share with the members in their groups a bit about themselves



Kingston volunteers Lawrence, Risa and Bee hail from China, Japan and South Africa. Lawrence and Risa shared their experiences of **coming to the UK on their own as children**.

Members loved Pam's entertaining stories about being a flight attendant.

Tuesday PM Zoom group discovered three of their volunteers had a psychology background and learnt more about what has inspired each of them to join Dyscover. Katia, Ellie, Sam and Jo all spoke passionately about **what they had gained from volunteering**.

Spotlight on Tim Ho



Online member Tim has had a very busy and varied life. He played the violin from the age of five and was a **member of the Halle Orchestra**.

He decided to quit his music career in 1996 and moved into a completely new world, working initially in IT for

Lady Elizabeth Anson, then working abroad.

His next move was to **set up a business in building and renovations**, having learnt the trade from a builder friend. He hopes to continue this and his first big project will be the house he and wife Bridget have recently moved into.

Tim had a **massive stroke in August 2022**. He was completely unaware of what was going on for 19 days.

The stroke left Tim initially unable to move or speak much at all. Thankfully, he has regained full mobility and a lot of his language. He lost his right field of vision, which means he cannot return to driving. **Tim is now embracing public transport** and enjoying the independence this brings.

Tim joined Dyscover in October 2023, originally in the Welcome Group, but after a term he moved to the **Tuesday PM Zoom Group**. Dyscover meetings are the highlight of his week. He loves the conversations and appreciates being given the time to talk. He's hoping to try one of our activities and has set himself the **challenge of coming to Dyscover for an ambassador meeting – by public transport**.

Tim is a great Lego fan and enjoys cooking.

Have you Heard

Celebrating our wonderful volunteers

We are very lucky to have a large and diverse team of **volunteers, who generously give up their time for us**. They make up 80% of our team, so we couldn't provide our crucial services without them. They often **go above and beyond their usual roles** and help in other ways, such as creating ideas for group activities and then delivering them, helping with special interest activities for members, at fundraising events; some have even taken on their own fundraising challenges! We are also most grateful to the small team of volunteers who **keep the courtyard garden at Leatherhead looking beautiful**.

Many volunteers go on to related jobs or university courses. No fewer than four volunteers will be **starting Masters degrees** in Speech and Language Therapy this Autumn.

Volunteer satisfaction survey

This year's survey again produced encouraging results: **89% of volunteers felt highly valued in their roles**

Feedback was very positive, too.

'I have so much fun and learn something new every week.'

'It is so rewarding to be part of such an inspiring and impactful community.'

If you would like to find out more about volunteering opportunities, please email us at info@dyscover.org.uk



We organised a Thank You lunch during Volunteers' Week.



Pat Flower recently received a Reigate & Banstead Volunteer Award in recognition of all she does for Dyscover.

Relatives' meeting

Our termly meetings for relatives aim to provide the **time and space for relatives to get to know each other**. They share views, plus hints and tips, with people in a similar position and ask questions about our service. Conversations are confidential and the environment is supportive. **At the June meeting in Kingston**, Maggie shared a training resource on how to better support conversations with a person with aphasia. Relatives found this a helpful reminder.

Meet the experts

Dyscover was invited to present at a session hosted by UCL for Masters SLT students. The aim was to give students practical experience of people who have communication difficulties as a result of a neurological condition. Our three ambassadors and a volunteer gave superb presentations, which were much appreciated.

Activities

Last term's air-rifle shooting at Bookham Rifle Club gave everyone a turn on **the live-fire range**.



The dedicated team at Leatherhead and Dorking Gymnastics Club offer members a specially designed fitness and movement class.



The sessions have **increasingly demanding options for everyone**.

Fundraising

Amy's half marathon

Amy Biggart completed the Hackney Half Marathon in **2 hours and 17 minutes** and raised £500 for us. Amy is the **niece of one of our members** and has seen first hand the value in the support that we have provided to her aunt over the years.



If you would like to **take on a challenge to fundraise for us**, we would love to hear from you. Please contact: info@dyscover.org.uk

Ros's walk

Leatherhead Volunteer Ros **took part in Rotawalk '24**, a 4-mile charity walk around Holmwood Common organised by Dorking Rotary. The weather wasn't kind, but Ros, her husband and dog completed the walk and have donated £50 to Dyscover.



Diary dates

21st September

AFTERNOON TEA at The Olive Tree, Ashted Garden Centre

18th October

QUIZ NIGHT

The Old Barn Hall, Bookham. To book tickets: <https://dyscover.enthuse.com/cf/quiz-night>

7th December

MOLE VALLEY SILVER BAND Christmas Concert for Dyscover. Details from <https://dyscover.enthuse.com/cf/mole-valley-silver-band-christmas-concert>

Our grateful thanks to:

KINGSWOOD GOLF CLUB

Ladies' Captain Loretta **organised a Charity Golf Day that raised £1,330**. Loretta is the wife of former Dyscover member Brian.

RED HAT SOCIETY

Fourteen ladies from the Basingstoke Chapter of the Red Hat



Society attended a fundraising garden party held by **Simone, who is the wife of one of our members**. They raised £255.

ECLIPSE CHOIR

We supported Kingston-based choir, *Eclipse*, by **running the bar at their Summer Performance** to raise funds for Dyscover. The event raised £542.



Thanks to our team of volunteers who worked so hard on the night.

ASHTEAD TRAIN STATION

Staff and customers of Ashted Train Station have been raising funds for us through a **popular book swap scheme** for three years. Their latest donation took the grand total to over £900.

Don't Send Me A Card

This year we are encouraging supporters to send **charity Christmas E-cards** and **donate** to Dyscover instead of buying cards and stamps. It's the fastest way to send friends and family your Christmas greeting. You can even upload your own photo to be included in your e-cards. Help our charity and save the planet too!

[Dyscover Christmas eCards | DontSendMeACard.com](https://dyscover.enthuse.com/cf/mole-valley-silver-band-christmas-concert)

Round Up

Summer activities

Our Summer Challenge programme was a great success, with 80 places filled across 10 activities. It included a wellbeing workshop, pilates sessions, music therapy, art classes, an activity day, cycling and a social meet-up. Thanks to Suzanne for putting together such a varied set of activities.

WELLBEING Our programme kicked off with a session called **Building a Wellbeing Toolkit**. Members spent time exploring day-to-day mood, feelings and emotions. Cathy Sparks led the session and provided a **trusted and sympathetic environment** to talk through difficult subjects.

ACTIVITY DAY High Ashurst provided a full day of thrilling challenges, including the High Ropes where members climbed a narrow ladder and **leapt off to catch a trapeze seven metres high!**



CYCLING We paid our **first visit to the racetrack at Wheels4All Epsom**, which offers a range of bikes for cycling solo or with a partner.



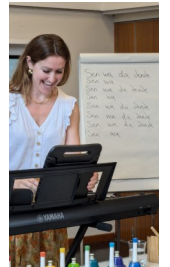
ART Artist Alison's session focussed on a **watercolour depiction of coleslaw ingredients**. You could hardly tell Andy's painting from the real thing.



PILATES Instructor Natalie heaped on the challenges, with core strengthening using the **ball, the band and each other!** Relatives were invited to join in a second session.



MUSIC Elizabeth of Chiltern Music Therapy combined standard exercises and singing with specific **neurological music therapy techniques** for speech and language.



GET TOGETHER A group of 11 met in Teddington for **coffee and a chat**—a first for zoom member Phil.



Top Draw Club

Our Top Draw Club raised the **splendid total of £4,830 for Dyscover in the last financial year**. Which means that the same amount was distributed as prizes.

Annual shares in the Club cost just £10 and enter you into five draws, including the super bonus draw in December. Please contact us at dyscovertopdraw@gmail.com and we will email you a form to buy shares.

Mole Valley Lottery

The Mole Valley Community Lottery has now been running for over three years and **several of our members have won prizes**.

The Lottery not only raises funds for local charities, but also **helps environmental causes**. Draws are held weekly and tickets start at £1 each week.

You can buy tickets to support Dyscover at: molevalleylottery.co.uk/support/dyscover

CONTACT US

dyscover.org.uk



Dyscover Limited, Leatherhead Court, Woodlands Road, Leatherhead, Surrey KT22 0BN

Tel: 01737 819419 Email: info@dyscover.org.uk

Registered Office: As above Company No :04814618 Registered Charity No: 1099432

