

March 2024

# DGMEFM Network

Support for ME, CFS, Fibromyalgia

Hello and welcome to my first newsletter as Acting Chairperson.



I was very apprehensive about taking on this role. Having life experience with several conditions, I was aware of the impact on energy levels/health. I have previously been a trustee for about 3 years and thankfully that gave me a fair insight into the DGMEFM Network.

Since my taking over as Chair on the 8th Nov 2023, we have as ever been a very busy wee team of trustees behind the scenes, including interviews for the admin post. We are pleased from the 1st December to welcome Christine Aitchison as our third member of staff.

At the Board meeting on the 23rd November 2023 the trustees all volunteered for roles they are eager to help with. Bobbie is now shadowing Paul in his

Treasurer role. Julie is overseeing Facebook and the Stranraer WhatsApp group. Corrie fed back that crafty socials had low attendance, (separate to craft classes) so crafty social are being rested presently.

I have dispensed leaflets through the Health Improvement Team, Community Link Team who meet people in their homes and The Community Hub in Newton Stewart (Wigtownshire). It is hoped going forward to replicate this across the other 3 areas in D&G - Stewartry, Nithsdale and Annandale & Eskdale.

The second intake of training for Befriending and Peer Mentoring will have completed and PVG checks done. We've had a few new members and are trying to get the word to those who would find our friendly Network beneficial.

We are now organising soup & sandwich socials roughly every 8 weeks in each area. So far in Stranraer, Castle Douglas, Dumfries, Annan & Lockerbie. All are welcome, details on the DGMEFM website [dgmefm.org.uk](http://dgmefm.org.uk) and in this newsletter. Booking can be found in Meetings & Events on the website, click on Calendar of events, or by calling the Network phone number 07557 536110 if not you are not online.

I hope you will be able to join us at one of these enjoyable events and I look forward to meeting some of you through the year.

I also hope I can make a good contribution to benefit the whole Network. My best wishes for you all, and thank you for having me as Chairperson.

*Diane Bond*



## Have you seen our Facebook page?

Lots of information is shared on our Facebook groups and we don't want you to miss out!

Search for [DGMEFM Network \(support for ME, CFS, Fibro, Long Covid\)](#) on Facebook and ask to join the group!

You will find lots of discussions, links to articles, up to date information on our planned events and loads of support from those who 'get it'.

Don't miss out – come and join us!

## No such thing as a free lunch? Not so!

Thanks to funding that DGMEFM Network has been able to source, there *IS* such a thing as a free lunch and these soup-and-sandwich events are now being held across the whole region.

If you haven't already been to any of these free get-togethers, please do consider coming along. We're a very friendly bunch of folk, all living with similar health issues, the food is offered free of charge by the Network and we chat about everything and anything.



We had another lovely soup-and-sandwich meet-up in Castle Douglas in the first week of February.

There were 19 of us with apologies from quite a few more who weren't able to make it at the last minute.

Some of us are able to provide lifts to anybody who needs one, just ask and we'll see what we can arrange. And if you want to bring your own food because of dietary restrictions, feel free to do so - some of our members already do.

It's always nice to get out and about, especially with like-minded folk who understand your condition/s because they've got them too. And don't forget, you can bring your carer too at no extra charge – just remember to book their place.

Lastly, apart from regular updates on the Facebook members' page: [DGMEFM Network \(support for ME, CFS, Fibro, Long Covid\)](#), there is a full calendar of events to be found here: [dgmefm.org.uk/calendar/](https://dgmefm.org.uk/calendar/) and it will be regularly updated.

Looking forward to having lunch with you soon!

*Bobbie*

## Pop-Up Meet-Ups

**Castle Douglas** - Monday 15<sup>th</sup> April at Gordon Memorial Hall at 1.15pm

Please book your FREE place using the Eventbrite link <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/castle-douglas-meet-up-tickets-732213378927>

Next date for your diary at Castle Douglas is Monday 10<sup>th</sup> June – same time and place.

**Dumfries** – Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> March at Crichton Central at 11.30am.

Please book your FREE place and make your sandwich choice using the Eventbrite link <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/dumfries-meet-up-tickets-737038601297>

Next date for your diary at Dumfries is Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> May – same time and place.

**Stranraer** – Friday 15<sup>th</sup> March at Rustique Cafe, Commerce Rd at 12.30pm.

Book your FREE place using the Eventbrite link

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/stranraer-meet-up-tickets-846470826027>

**NEW! Lockerbie** – Friday 19<sup>th</sup> April at Just Be Bistro at 12 noon.

Book your FREE place using the Eventbrite link

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/lockerbie-meet-up-tickets-820103580887>

Booking on Eventbrite confirms your space. No actual ticket is required. If you have any difficulty with booking or any queries, please contact [christine@dgmefm.org.uk](mailto:christine@dgmefm.org.uk).

We had a very successful meet up in Annan in February and hope to arrange another one soon.

Thanks to funding from the Communities Mental Health and Wellbeing Fund, we are able to offer a soup and sandwich meal free of charge at our pop-up meet-ups. Members will need to pay for their own drinks (at Castle Douglas meet up drinks are provided due to venue).

Check out the website and Facebook page for more information on dates / locations over the coming weeks.

Alternatively, give us a call on: 07557 536 110 to find out where we'll be meeting and when.

*Sometimes you cannot ... really say  
How terrible ... you are today  
You try to hide ... the awful pain  
It's so difficult ... to explain  
No pills can ever ... help you out  
You want to cry ... scream and shout  
There's so much ... that you want to do  
You sadly mourn ... the healthy you  
What we really ... want to say  
Why is there ... No better way  
To give us all ... some small respite  
To let us get ... a sleep at night  
Alas for now ... we're on our own  
Just this group ... reached on your phone  
To share a chat ... a caring note  
Or something helpful ... that they wrote  
So sufferers ... please note you'll find  
If troubles, questions ... are on your mind  
This group ... is just a txt away  
To lighten up ... your night or day*

**Trish Geddes**

Taken from FMA UK newsletter Issue 24 - 01

## A Tribute to June

Some of you will know June, or know of her, particularly members from the early days of the Network at the turn of the century. She developed ME in the late 90s, as many of us have through living a high-pressure life with stress at work and personal circumstances. Then later, she was diagnosed with cancer, which she has been living with for the last ten years, but progressed rapidly this last year until sadly she passed at the Winter Solstice. Now free from pain, and likely dancing with nature spirits!

I will forever cherish our years together and all we shared, but that's for me personally, and for those of you who will also treasure memories of her.

I want to talk here about her support for the Network, which might not be where it is now without her influence.

June was an active member of the Network when I met her, helping where she could with the newsletter and such. When I became ill in 2004 she helped me learn the importance of pacing, partly from seeing her own 'boom and bust', and without that early understanding I don't think I would have kept on a relatively even keel. We left for Cumbria in 2006 but she kept her contact with Network members and when we came back eight years later it was at the crucial time when Denis and Norma had stepped down and the decision for the organisation to fold was highly probable, except for Craig's determination to try and keep it going.

June convinced me to attend the special meeting, held a short while after we returned - to decide whether to fold, apart from the Facebook group, or to carry on if enough members would help to take the Network forward. I agreed to take on the Treasurer role. Craig, as Chair, and I worked to keep the Network viable, along with the support from other committee members. The newsletter continued albeit at low financial cost needing a lot of effort from a few dedicated members, June included. It was hard work and we desperately needed to find able-bodied help.

We developed a vision that led to us seeking support from Sleeping Giants, which brought funding and helped us build robust foundations for the changes to the organisation over the past few years, to where we are today with three members of staff and more support and activities available to members.

I wouldn't have been able to endure the challenges I faced in the process over those years without June's steadfast support and encouragement.

Some years ago, June wrote an ode to ME which was included in a newsletter at the time, but I'd like to share it again, with a bit more hope now of wider understanding and a better future for us all growing over time.



*Paul*



## ME

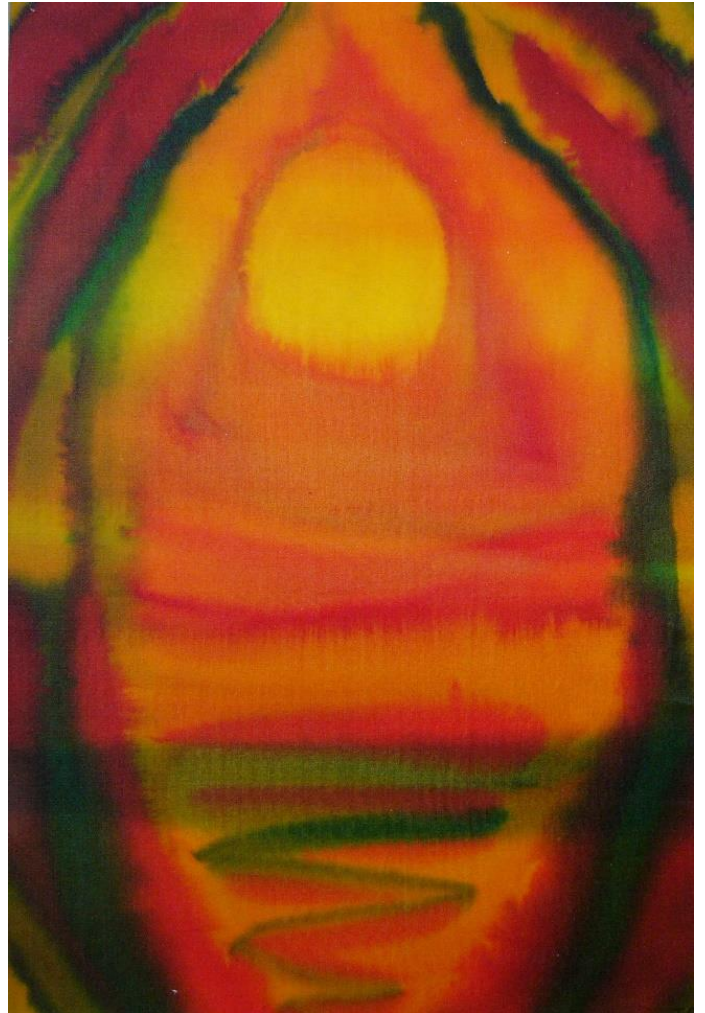
ME – where did you find Me?  
Was it in the virus that didn't go away,  
or wasn't I listening to the stress I was under,  
or did you just arrive out of nowhere?

ME – why did you find Me?  
Was I going too fast in life and needed to slow down,  
or were my priorities wrong,  
or was I just unlucky?

ME – what have you taken from Me?  
My job, many friends,  
loss of my own self-worth,  
my independence, my life.  
You are with me always.

ME – what have you given Me?  
Some friends who really care,  
finding blessings in small things,  
learning to take as well as give,  
pain and fatigue,  
the challenge of living with an invisible illness,  
the disbelievers.

*June Randell*



*Pathway, by June 2009*

## Social Meet-Up: First Thursday of the month Online meeting

Join us for a brew and a blether. Come and get to know us, chat, ask questions and make new friends. Sometimes we have talks or discussions from outside speakers.

We meet on the first Thursday of every month. Meetings take place over zoom only for the time being. Join any time between 2pm – 3:30pm.

You can join us by downloading 'Zoom Cloud Meetings' on your smart phone or tablet or go to [www.zoom.us](http://www.zoom.us) on your computer. Enter this info: Meeting ID: 820 6367 4993, Passcode: 2024

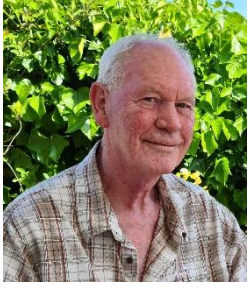
### Upcoming Speakers

7<sup>th</sup> March – Avril McLean from Action for ME

2<sup>nd</sup> May – Hazel Borland from FMA UK

**Look out for updates on Zoom meeting topics and guests on our Facebook page, website or in your email inbox.**

## Money Matters



With many thanks to all who've made donations over the past months and years to help meet our running costs, I'm pleased to say that through Eppie's work we've been awarded a Henry Duncan grant amounting to £8000 per year for 5 years. We've never wanted to rely on members for financial support, and although of course I wouldn't turn down any donations, for a while at least we can rest assured that our basic costs are covered.

We will still need to apply for further grants for our projects, if they are to continue in some form beyond their current term. For example, we're able to extend the Soup & Sandwich and Craft/Wellbeing projects for a further year, to the end of March 2025, through a successful application for a third grant towards 'wellbeing activities' from the Communities Mental Health and Wellbeing Fund.

Last year the Edinburgh ME Self-help group (EDMESH) unfortunately had to close down as a charity. We were very grateful that they chose us as beneficiaries to their assets. Together with a legacy they were due, which the executors decided should likewise come to us, we have received over £8000. It's sad for the Edinburgh group but gives us further financial security and support for our activities.

*Paul*

## Easyfundraising

Did you know that DGMEFM Network is registered with easyfundraising? Easyfundraising is an online site that has over 7,000 different brands registered with them. Why you buy something, going through easyfundraising, you pay the same amount as you would but the company donate part of that amount to us! It is a very easy method for you to help us fundraise! Our link is:

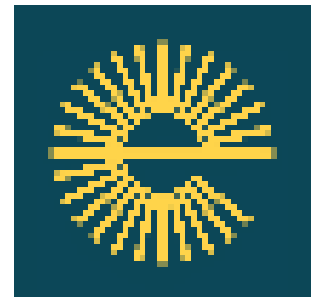
<https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/dgmefmnetwork>

All you have to do is register with them on a computer or laptop and download their browser extension (all of this is super easy to do – just follow website instructions). Then it will automatically pop up if you are shopping at a brand that uses easyfundraising! Look out for this logo:



Alternatively, you can download their app onto you phone or tablet which looks like this.

Please consider supporting us when purchasing online.



## New admin support officer

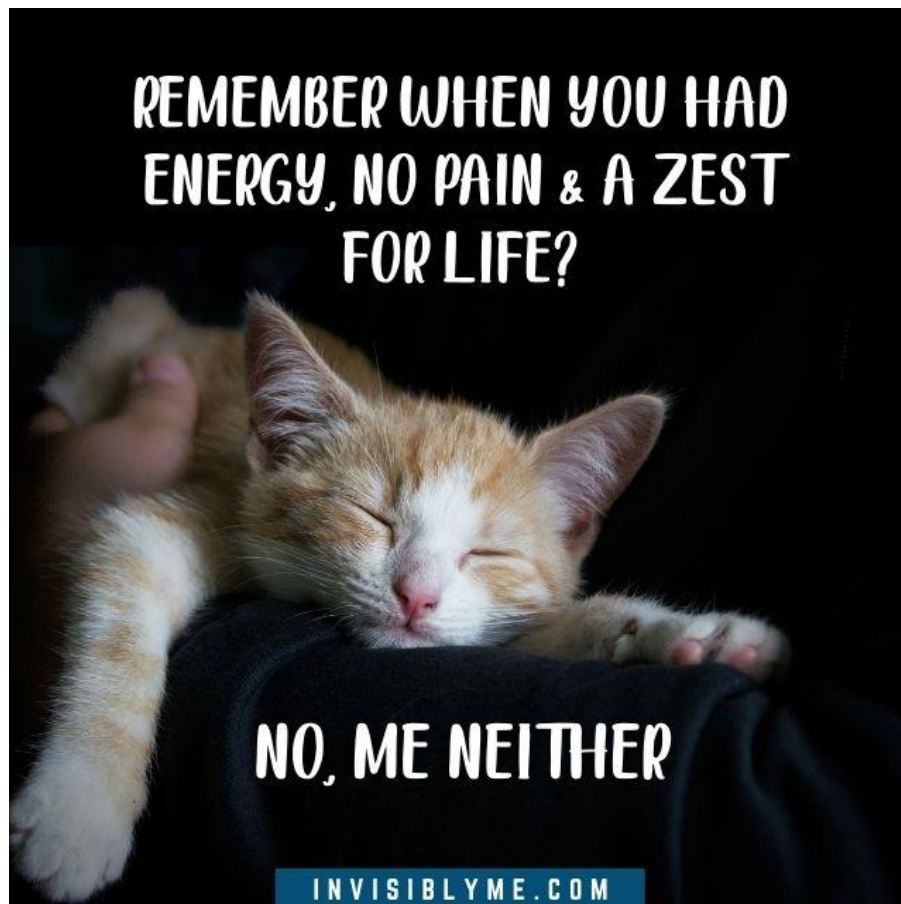


Hi, my name is Christine Aitchison and I am the new Admin Support Officer for DGMEFM Network. I started my role at the start of December and am responsible for organising craft and wellbeing workshops, hosting meet ups in Annan and Lockerbie, creating blogs, keeping you updated on Facebook, inviting speakers to our monthly online meet ups, board meeting admin and creating this newsletter!

I have been a long-time member of the Network as I have ME/CFS so I am delighted to now have a role on the staff. I am so happy that I can support the Network to do its very valuable work. I have an insight into being a member and have previously taken part in some workshops and meetings. So we may have already met! I was a teacher for 20 years but health issues meant I couldn't continue in that role so now I have a few part time jobs which I am really enjoying. This means that I have set hours that I work for the network so if I don't respond right away – please be patient with me! I will reply when I am next working.

If you would like to contact me, my email address is [christine@dgmeffm.org.uk](mailto:christine@dgmeffm.org.uk)  
I look forward to working for you!

*Christine*



## Update on Befriending and Peer Mentoring Project

As I write this article for the newsletter I am excitedly and nervously awaiting our next block of training. This time we are merging both peer mentoring and befriending training packages as there is a lot of cross over for both roles. This project came about after the Network did some consultation with its members with the help of Sleeping Giants and at the time members said this was something that they would find both welcome and beneficial.

Benefits from befriending and peer mentoring are many and varied. From increases in wellbeing and lessening of loneliness and isolation to getting out the house, starting new hobbies and understanding and better management of conditions. We also hope to work with partners in Health and Social Care to not only let them know about the project for possible referrals but raise awareness of the Network and the work it does.

Volunteers also get lots of benefits like training, meeting new people, certificates, new experiences and knowing that you are making a real difference to someone.

If you would like to know more about the project please get in touch with me, Kalpana on [kalpana@dgmefm.org.uk](mailto:kalpana@dgmefm.org.uk) or phone/ text/ WhatsApp on 07761 048 514

Or think you know someone who would benefit from a befriender or peer mentor please ask them to get in touch with me on the details above.



Kalpana 😊

Member contributions are very valued.  
Thank you to everyone who has contributed to this edition.  
If there's something you'd like to see in the next newsletter, or you feel able to write something for us, please do so and send to:  
[admin@dgmefm.org.uk](mailto:admin@dgmefm.org.uk)



Phone or WhatsApp: 07557 536110  
Website: [www.dgmefm.org.uk](http://www.dgmefm.org.uk)  
Facebook: [facebook.com/groups/dgmefm](https://facebook.com/groups/dgmefm)  
Email: [diane@dgmefm.org.uk](mailto:diane@dgmefm.org.uk) (Acting Chair)  
[paul@dgmefm.org.uk](mailto:paul@dgmefm.org.uk) (Treasurer)



*Please let us know if you no longer wish to receive the newsletter or if you want to change how you receive it. Also, if your contact details have changed or if you wish to cease being a member of the Network, please contact us on [admin@dgmefm.org.uk](mailto:admin@dgmefm.org.uk) or text or phone 07557 536110.*