

September 2026

DGMEFM Network

Support for ME, CFS, Fibromyalgia

Welcome from the Chair

I'm starting to write this article on a gloriously sunny day in August where I have enjoyed sitting out in the garden doing absolutely nothing. I'm sure that soaking up the sun is good for our bones and, of course, it's scientifically proven that sunshine alters our mood, it perks us up.

And by golly do we need perking up. Living with chronic pain is not easy, nor is everyday life where we're bombarded by bad news right, left and centre and many of us are perhaps struggling due to the cost of living crisis, or the fear created by the war in the Middle East.

I'm trying my best to ignore the news channels, both on TV and on my mobile phone and have reached a point where I know that there is little I can do about any crisis in the outside world. So I push these things to the back of my mind now and concentrate, maybe for the first time in my life, on me.

Yes, lil' ole me who was brought up to Hoover and dust the whole house every second day, to never leave a dish lying in the kitchen – everything has its place – to iron all the laundry on the same day it was washed and so on. That was the way I was taught both at home and in school. In fact, I was so pleased when our Home Economics teacher congratulated me on how well I could wring out my dishcloth! I told her, I get plenty practice at home, Miss.

But now, I'm learning to pace my activities, I'm learning to ask for help which my husband readily provides and I'm realising that the house doesn't need dusted that often, that there are certain clothes that you can just smooth out and put away, they don't all need ironed and that if there's anything lying about on the kitchen worktops, it does not matter.

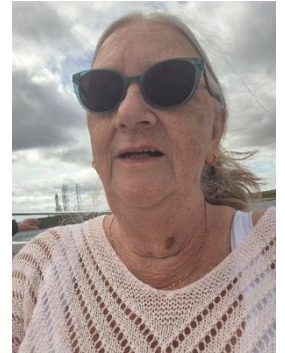
Pacing is a wonderful activity and I like to congratulate myself on everything that I manage to do or accomplish. Realising and accepting that I'm no longer the energetic "clean freak" of years gone by helps me so much and talking to friends and family about my condition and how I cope has now liberated me to a great extent.

I hope you, my fellow members, have found your own ways of coping and not beating yourselves up about what you can no longer do. Let's continue to concentrate on what we can do and, above all, on ourselves. No-one knows our conditions as well as we do.

Now, speaking of what we can do, Kalpana and Christine have organised a varied list of activities for us including watercolour painting, a writing course and more get-togethers for tea, coffee and cake and general companionship. I do hope to see as many members as possible taking advantage of these outings. And don't forget to speak to one of us if you'd like to attend, but don't have transport. We will do our best to match you up with someone from your area who is driving and can help you.

DGMEFM continues to participate in both the Operations Group and the Steering Group of the NHS DG pathway mapping project for people living with Energy Limiting Conditions. Lynne Mann who is leading this important project has kindly accepted to attend our AGM to explain it in greater detail and answer any questions you may have. That's as good a reason as any to attend the AGM, either in person in Castle Douglas or by Zoom, on October 6th. Lynne will be with us between 2 and 3pm, following our own business from 1 to 2 pm.

Wishing you all the best for the end of summer and the beginning of autumn.



Bobbie

Annual General Meeting (AGM) 2026 Notification

Notice is hereby given that a Members Meeting of the Dumfries & Galloway ME and Fibromyalgia Network will be held on Tuesday 6th October 2026 at 1.15pm. This will be a hybrid meeting so participants can attend in person at Gordon Memorial Hall, 68 St Andrew Street, Castle Douglas DG7 1EN or join via <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/8430015846?pwd=ZYlCeOCd1wu1vKqukJX8TY5mGZpaCu.1&omn=83904095898> using zoom.

Meeting ID: 843 001 5846

Passcode: 2026

The meeting will include the annual report from the Chairperson, Bobbie Jeal, on the activities of the charity; consideration of the annual accounts for the charity from the Treasurer, Paul Thompson; and election/re-election of charity trustees. If you would like a copy of the accounts, please get in touch beforehand. Directly after the AGM, we are delighted to welcome our speaker, Lynne Mann, Lead AHP – Dumfries and Galloway Community, who will give us an update on the progress of the Energy Limiting Conditions pathway. This is something that some of our trustees and staff are involved in, advocating on behalf of our members. Afterwards there will be a craft activity led by Kalpana for anyone wanting to take part.

We would love to see as many people attend as possible! For those attending in person, there will not be the usual sandwich orders but there will be tea, coffee and cake provided. Feel free to bring your own lunch if you wish. Members are welcome to bring a 'plus 1' to come too however please note that only DGMEFM Network members can nominate board members/trustees and vote at the AGM. To assist us with registration, let us know you are coming by emailing christine@dgmeffm.org.uk on or before 30th September 2026 to confirm if you wish to attend and if this will be in-person or via Zoom. Please include if you would like to take part in the craft activity.

If you are unable to attend the meeting, you can nominate either another member or the Chairperson to represent and vote on your behalf, by completing a 'Members Proxy Vote Form'. For this form, email us at admin@dgmeffm.org.uk or telephone 07557 536110; forms to be returned to us by 4th October 2026. The quorum for a members' meeting is 8 members. Only DGMEFM Network members are permitted to vote. In the past the AGM has had to be rescheduled due to poor attendance, so it is really important that you come along either in person or via zoom if you can.

Trustee recruitment

Want to help make the Network even better?



DGMEFM Network has a great bunch of trustees who do a brilliant job. We really want some more trustees to join us! It could be you, a family member, friend, carer – just someone you know who would be great. Ideally the trustee should have some understanding of ME/CFS, Fibro or Long Covid but this isn't essential.

The role involves attending 4 Board meetings per year and also, attending our AGM. Beyond that, a trustee can take on extra roles if they wish.

We really want to grow our trustees so that we can continue to support and benefit our members. If you have someone in mind, please ask them to contact our Chair bobbie@dgmeffm.org.uk.

Events and Activities

Monday 7th September – Lunch meet up at Shoreline Stranraer @1pm

Meet for a chat with friends over lunch. This event is not funded. Pre-order your food on the Stranraer WhatsApp group or email christine@dgmefm.org.uk



Monday 14th September – Acrylic painting with Julie from The Artful Corner in St John's Church Hall, Dumfries @ 1.15pm

Create a Northern Lights acrylic painting on canvas. This workshop will be led by Julie Stephen of The Artful Corner. This is a fully funded activity. Click here to book <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/northern-lights-acrylic-painting-workshop-dumfries-tickets-1995701465807?aff=oddttdtcreator> or email kalpana@dgmefm.org.uk

Friday 18th September – Bring and share lunch in Annan Old Parish Church Hall @12 noon.

Come and have a good blether with other members while enjoying some food. Bring yourself, a friend or partner (not mandatory!) and some food to share with others. Feel free to bring food just for you if you have dietary restrictions. We will provide the space and the teas and coffees. We haven't tried this before but it is something our members have suggested so we are giving it a go. Do come along! Book your place by clicking this link <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/1996219083014?aff=oddttdtcreator> or email christine@dgmefm.org.uk

Monday 21st September – Mandala workshop in The Old School, Thornhill @1.15pm

Dive into the colourful world of mandala painting. It's super relaxing and perfect for anyone wanting to unleash their inner artist while enjoying the company of others.

Click here to book <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/1998208609742?aff=oddttdtcreator> or email kalpana@dgmefm.org.uk

Wednesday 23rd September – Acrylic painting with Julie from The Artful Corner in Gordon Memorial Hall, Castle Douglas @ 1.20pm

Create a Northern Lights acrylic painting on canvas. This workshop will be led by Julie Stephen of The Artful Corner. This is a fully funded activity. Book your place using the link

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/northern-lights-acrylic-painting-workshop-castle-douglas-tickets-1995701178949> or email kalpana@dgmefm.org.uk

Creative writing workshops – online 6 week block on the following dates: 13th Sep, 27th Sep, 1st Nov, 15th Nov, 29th Nov, 13th Dec (all Sundays) 4-6pm

This is a series of workshops and there is an expectation for you to attend them all.

Get ready to unleash your inner author at our Creative Writing workshops led by Diana looking at different areas of creative writing. You don't have to have done anything like this before and people will only share anything produced if they wish to. Book your place using the link

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/1995716903983?aff=oddttdtcreator> or email kalpana@dgmefm.org.uk

Creative writing workshops – in person at Stranraer Library 6 week block on the following dates: Mon 7th Sep, 23rd Sept, 28th Oct, 11th Nov, 25th Nov, 9th Dec (all Wednesdays apart from first one) 1-3pm

This is a series of workshops and there is an expectation for you to attend them all.

Get ready to unleash your inner author at our Creative Writing workshops led by Diana looking at different areas of creative writing. You don't have to have done anything like this before. Book your place using the link

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/1995715013328?aff=oddttdtcreator> or email kalpana@dgmefm.org.uk

Friday 9th October – Mandala workshop in The Merse, Newton Stewart @1.15pm

Dive into the colourful world of mandala painting. It's super relaxing and perfect for anyone wanting to unleash their inner artist while enjoying the company of others.

Click here to book <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/1998209053068?aff=oddtcreator>

or email kalpana@dgmeffm.org.uk

Wednesday 28th October – Sound bath in St John's Church Hall, Dumfries @ 1pm

Get emersed in waves of sound while sitting or lying down. Be led by experienced practitioner, June, who will lead you in this relaxing experience. This is a fully funded activity. Click here to book

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/1997443632675?aff=oddtcreator> or email kalpana@dgmeffm.org.uk

Wednesday 28th October – Sound bath in Baxter Hall, Eastriggs (near Annan) @ 6pm

Get emersed in waves of sound while sitting or lying down. Be led by experienced practitioner, June, who will lead you in this relaxing experience. This is a fully funded activity. Click here to book

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/1997443153241?aff=oddtcreator> or email kalpana@dgmeffm.org.uk

Booking on Eventbrite confirms your space - no actual ticket is required. If you have any difficulty with booking or any queries, please contact christine@dgmeffm.org.uk or kalpana@dgmeffm.org.uk

New Creative project - Slow Joy: Nurturing the Soul During Illness

What would you want people to know about your life before illness and now? How is life different now?

What do your bad days look like? How did life look before?

What brings you a bit of joy in your life now?

We want to support you to engage with these questions creatively.

We are going to ask you to go through a process for you to reflect on what your life was like before illness, how your life is now and what brings you joy. The outcome of this would be to create an exhibition of some kind showing what you have created. The purpose of this is to share our lives and joys as well as raise awareness of our illnesses. We want to help people understand the challenges of long-term conditions and the impact it has had on us as well as the joy that we still find. The project will be displayed in 3 'sections': **Before illness**, **The reality of life now**, and **What brings me joy**. Preferably, we would love you to contribute to all 3 but they do not all need to be all singing and dancing pieces. In fact, each part can be as simple or complex as you wish. What we want to see is something reflective of you.

This could take the form of a photo, poetry, painting, collage, simply a word written on a piece of paper, ...any way you feel you want to express yourself! You absolutely do not need to be an artist, writer or crafter to participate. We have planned this to be an inclusive project – everyone can take part in whatever way they feel able.

There will be opportunities to come together with other members to be creative together both online and in various meet ups across the region. Alternatively, it may work better for you to do some things on your own and that will be fine too. Ultimately, we want your contributions in any way you want to share them.

As we continue to plan this project, keep an eye out for creative activities planned over the next few months to get your ideas flowing and consider how you might like to contribute. More information will come as we finalize our plans.

One year on

By the time you're reading this I will have been in post for just over a year. For those who don't know who I am, my name is Kalpana and I am the Wellbeing Worker here at the Network. You may have seen posts and polls on Facebook, emails and other articles in past newsletters. My role involves meeting with professionals at Network meetings and events. These meetings are mainly to raise awareness of the Network, what it does and what our members want from services. To date, I have been involved in job and health fairs for Job centres in Dumfries and Annan. I have been in contact with every GP practice in Dumfries & Galloway as well as Community link workers and Public health practitioners across the region. I will continue to raise awareness at every opportunity possible. If you know of any events going on near you that you think it would be good for me to be at, please let me know and I will try my best to be there. Now to the part that I really enjoy! Organising all the lovely fun activities that members ask me to run. To date we have had over 60 activities across D&G from the Isle of Whithorn to Sanquhar. I hope to be able to have even more next year! Please let me know if there is anything you would like me to organise. We have had activities such as online expressive writing, online chair yoga, Easter Wreaths, Iris folding, Gelli plate printing and hair appointments at D&G colleges. We have worked with several local facilitators, but I am always looking for any members who would like to share any of their interests and skills. Do you have a talent or interest you would like to share with us? All materials and organisation will be provided, just get in touch with me kalpana@dgmefm.org.uk

I have really enjoyed getting out and about and meeting lots of members, old and new and will definitely be doing more of that in the years to come. If you would like to meet with me or chat with me about any Network things please don't hesitate to get in touch.

We have seen our WhatsApp and Messenger groups grow this past year, which has been great as these groups are your support groups so please feel free to chat and reach out to other members there. If you are not in a group and would like to be please let me know.

The Befriending and Peer mentoring service is still running, and I will be offering some training in the Autumn. If you would like to volunteer or know about the projects, please reach out to me.

Kalpana

Poem

This is the final poem entry from our poetry competition last year (think it might be time for a new competition?) This one I kept until last as it was my personal favourite. It was creatively assembled by Irene Turner. It put a huge smile on my face!



By Irene Turner

Local author shares free access to Fibromyalgia books

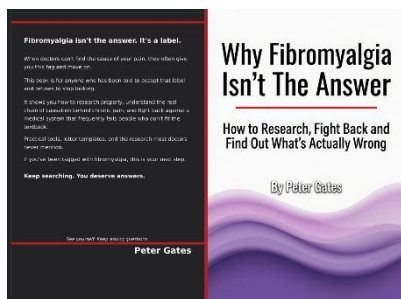
The Network was contacted by Peter Gates (this is a pen name) regarding his 2 books on his experience with Fibromyalgia. He is a Scottish patient-author who has lived with fibromyalgia and chronic widespread pain for over a decade. He told us,

"I've just published two books built around the real questions I kept seeing asked in fibromyalgia support groups, combined with my own experience and direct links to the published research behind it all. One is short and accessible for people who just want answers and a way forward. The other is the full body of work behind it.

What I only realised later is that I'd been gathering the second book for more than a decade without knowing it. All I was actually doing was researching my own condition and storing everything I found so I could take it to my own caregivers and fight for proper investigation. Over the years that quietly became information for the books.

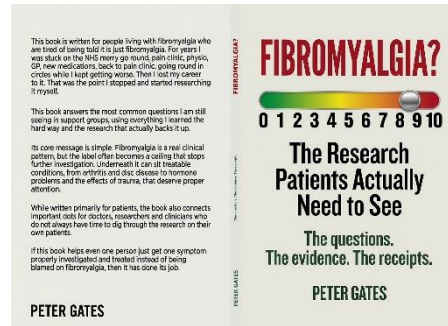
As a fellow Scot, I'm especially glad to write to a network supporting people with ME and Fibromyalgia here at home in Dumfries and Galloway. Your reach with patients is exactly why I'm writing to you. I believe these books may be something that could help the people you support."

Peter has offered to give our members access to these books via Amazon Kindle or free on the dates below:



Why Fibromyalgia Isn't The Answer:
free on Kindle from **9th to 13th September.**

Fibromyalgia? The Research Patients Actually Need to See:
free on Kindle from **9th to 11th September.**



It is worth noting that the free periods run on Amazon's US clock, so each one starts and finishes at around 8am UK time. Anyone downloading on the final day is best doing it in the morning to be safe.

DGMEFM Network is happy to share access to these books but is not endorsing them, you need to use your own judgement when taking any action resulting from reading these books.

Is your information up to date?

We want to keep in touch with you and share ways for you to benefit from the Network. We have many members who do not have an email address registered with us. This means you will miss out on information shared via email. If you have an email address but do not currently hear from us by this method, please email christine@dgmeffm.org.uk to update your records. Also, if you have moved house or changed phone number, please remember to let us know. If you are unsure if your details are up to date, please christine@dgmeffm.org.uk with your current information.

Looking back

When it was suggested that I write something since I've now been involved with the Network for 5 years, I couldn't believe it had been so long! It's funny how things feel as if they were both yesterday and a lifetime ago at the same time.

I just checked and it looks like I joined the Network in August 2021. Back then we'll have still be working through Covid restrictions, with many Network members being affected by both Covid and Long-Covid. Almost everything we were doing was online and funding was hard to come by – with funding being diverted to Covid-recovery projects.

I remember my favourite part of the work back then was making up art packs to send out to people so they could participate in taster workshops. There was so much variety in what our members wanted to learn and experiment with and it was great getting to learn a little about all of those art forms myself.

The other overwhelming thing that I remember from that time was the absolute power of work that had gone into running the Network up until that point. A small, dedicated, highly committed group of volunteers had been running it for about 20 years when I joined and they'd done a spectacular job! Fast-forward 5-years on, the Network now has 3 part-time staff members, a Board of Trustees with a vast range of skills and substantial multi-year funding. Network members are given opportunities to take part in activities across the length and breadth of the region and, if the feedback we receive reflects the reality, then the services we're offering are making a big difference in helping people to feel less isolated, more connected and, ultimately, happier.

I only have a light-touch involvement with the Network now (providing line management to the other two staff and sourcing funding) but Kalpana and Christine are doing a superb job of both delivering and developing the services to ensure we continue to meet the needs of Network members.

If the growth over the last 5 years is anything to go by, it really is impossible to say where the Network will be in 5 years' time but I know for sure that it will have the needs and wellbeing of the members right at the very heart!

Eppie

Fused glass workshop

Another great crafting session was organised by Christine in the Annandale area in June. This time it was a fused glass workshop with expert Mary Palmer from Moffat. Eight members attended in Annan Old Parish Church Hall...a lovely cool, spacious venue. After showing us the various glass formats available...wall plaques, curved stands, coasters etc, Mary then talked us through various techniques and glass resources. We were then free to create at will in whatever style we fancied. Amazingly, in 90 minutes we were able to produce quite an array of different pieces. We even had time for tea and biscuits.

Mary then took the work home with her to fuse in her specialist kiln, and the final works of art were ready for collection the following week.

Thanks to Christine, Mary and all the members who joined in.

Sarah

Here are some of the finished pieces of work





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: christine@dgmefm.org.uk

DGMEFM



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