

# ATAXIA UK COVENTRY AND WARWICKSHIRE SUPPORT GROUP

## NEWSLETTER JANUARY 2016 ISSUE 24

Hi all! Happy New Year and I hope you had a great Christmas. I hope this newsletter finds you well.

Firstly Ataxia UK would like you to know about this new grant that's available.

The Mark Dower Trust was recently set up in memory of Mark, who sadly passed away in 2003, aged 41. Mark had FA and was fiercely independent and driven, truly living his life to the full. Though he loved his family and his home he wanted the same autonomy which other young people yearn for; the ability to make his own choices and to have his own space.

The Mark Dower Trust aims to help similarly independent young people who have been diagnosed with ataxia to develop and enjoy hobbies and activities and to enhance their skills.

Mark enjoyed painting and drawing as well as writing poetry. At the age of 19, he heard about an opportunity to live in a house away from home and to attend college with other creative young people. He set about getting involved.

When the local authority rejected his application for funding, Mark responded by conducting a 'sit-in' at the council offices, staying put all day until the officers agreed to review their decision. He won his fight and spent an incredible few years making life-long friendships, writing a book of poetry as

beginning his autobiography. Whilst there, he learnt new painting techniques and held several exhibitions, selling his work to the public.

Inspired by Mark's independent spirit and appetite to try new things, The Mark Dower Trust offers a small annual grant of up to £3,000. The aim is to support young people in their quest for independent living through enabling them to develop skills, hobbies or interests. The applicant should be between the ages of 16-30 and diagnosed with Ataxia.

Applications can be sent in anytime from November 30th 2015 up to the closing date of January 31st 2016. The successful applicant, deemed the most in need, will be notified by letter by the end of February 2016. For more information, please contact Ataxia UK's helpline on 0845 644 0606 or email [help@ataxia.org.uk](mailto:help@ataxia.org.uk).

### Our last meeting - Sunday 15th November 2015



Bev (CA); Sue; Kate (CA); Sarah (CA); Tess (CA); Neil (FA) and his PA; Catherine (CA) and her husband Paul and myself (FA) came along to this especially lovely meeting.

Neil was just about to fly off to Florida, staying in some really well

adapted villas (see <http://www.graingevillaflorida.com>). I have stayed here a few times too - I will always have very fond memories of spending time in the pool thanks to their hoist.

Catherine recommended Expert Patient Programme (see <http://www.nhs.uk/NHSEngland/AboutNHSservices/doctors/Pages/expert-patients-programme.aspx>) - she said it was invaluable to her in learning how to manage her ataxia.

Bev mentioned that she was having difficulty using her kettle and was on the look-out for an alternative. I told her about SuperKettles, which are "so easy and convenient - the push button or cup switch deliver water effortlessly, perfect if you have difficulty lifting or tipping an ordinary kettle." - see <http://www.superkettles.co.uk>.

### Our Christmas lunch - Saturday 12th December 2015



#### OUR NEXT MEETING

Sunday 24th January 2016  
at 2 - 4pm at Exhall Old School  
Community Centre, Exhall Green,  
Exhall CV7 9GL.

Who I am and how to contact me: I am Katie Henderson (you can find out more about me at <http://ohbother.co.uk> and I am the named contact for the group. You can contact me by e-mailing [katie@ohbother.co.uk](mailto:katie@ohbother.co.uk) or phoning 07565 247 183. I am also on Facebook. The group is on Facebook - search for "Ataxia UK Coventry". For news on group events and to download previous newsletters etc visit <http://ataxiacoventry.co.uk/>.

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