

## South West Midlands & Wolverhampton Network

### MERRY CHRISTMAS

Wishing all our members a safe and peaceful time this Christmas.

With such a turbulent year this year and uncertain times ahead we wanted to reach out and give you a little update on what we've been up to recently.



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Further support is also available from Crohn's & Colitis UK: <https://crohnsandcolitis.org.uk/support>

#### Lockdown Stories

We would like to hear from you if you have a lockdown achievement. A new hobby that has been successful, a new adventure that has led you somewhere positive, a skill you never knew you had!

In our next newsletter we would like to share some positivity with your stories. Please send a photo with your story to: [swmw@networks.crohnsandcolitis.org.uk](mailto:swmw@networks.crohnsandcolitis.org.uk)



#### Ruth Haywood, Awareness & Activities Volunteer

I have been teaching myself how to use digital media to enhance my art work. By using photos of my art/textiles work and enhancing them on the computer. The difficulties have been with learning about sizing and formats, but I am really enjoying the process and it passes the time!



#### Sam Lawrence, Lead Volunteer

It's been strange adjusting to lockdown but I have used this time by taking part in two online language classes, talking to friends and family over Zoom and going for a walk after work as a way to relax. I've been able to discover lots more green spaces in my area and I'm looking forward to carrying this on in the new year!

## AWARENESS WEEK

### Here's what we got up to 1st-7th December 2020

The first week of December was Crohn's and Colitis Awareness Week 2020! In a difficult year for many, we are overwhelmed by the support of our community and proud of how we have made it through so far. To celebrate the week, we asked you to make a difference in a new way each day. Learn more about how the week went here:

[www.crohnsandcolitis.org.uk/news/awareness-week-2020-how-did-it-go](http://www.crohnsandcolitis.org.uk/news/awareness-week-2020-how-did-it-go)

Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup>: Find a new way to give

Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup>: Tell someone about your Crohn's or Colitis

Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup>: What's it like to live with Crohn's or Colitis?

Friday 4<sup>th</sup>: Go Purple to raise awareness of Crohn's and Colitis!

Saturday 5<sup>th</sup>: Take action

Sunday 6<sup>th</sup>: Christmas craft tutorial

Monday 7<sup>th</sup>: Live music with Passionflower



Looking for guidance on COVID-19, managing daily life or questions about vaccines? Check out the FAQ page which provides support for people living with Crohn's or Colitis:

<https://crohnsandcolitis.org.uk/news/coronavirus-covid-19-advice>

## MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

When you have Crohn's Disease or Ulcerative Colitis, it can be easy to prioritise looking after your physical symptoms. But coping with a long-term condition can have a big impact on your mental wellbeing too. Research suggests that people living with Crohn's or Colitis may be twice as likely to experience mental health problems as the general population.

This higher likelihood is down to something called the 'Brain-Gut Axis'. Anxiety or depression can lead to new gut symptoms. Equally, experiencing symptoms in your gut has been linked to developing new psychological symptoms. Stress has also been linked to bringing on a flare-up.

What you can do to improve your mental wellbeing

- Keep your Crohn's or Colitis under control by taking your medicines regularly
- Find a community of people who understand what you're going through
- Learn about the condition and treatments from good sources of information. Understanding the benefits as well as risks of treatment, and finding new ways to manage troubling symptoms, can help relieve some of your anxiety
- Talk about your Crohn's or Colitis with family and friends. The 'In My Shoes' App can really help them understand your condition
- Regular exercise, however small, can make you feel better and help you sleep
- Find a Mindfulness technique that works for you

Check out the full publication 'Mental health and wellbeing' from Crohn's & Colitis UK [here](#)

## Volunteer with us!

We are always keen for new people to join our team. If you are interested in raising awareness and putting on events in the South West Midlands & Wolverhampton area, please take a look at our [opportunities](#).

[www.crohnsandcolitis.org.uk/volunteer](http://www.crohnsandcolitis.org.uk/volunteer)

## Looking forward ...

There are still difficult and uncertain times ahead but there is no harm in looking forward.

We hope 2021 will bring a bit more certainty. As soon as it is safe to do so we will start up the 'get togethers' and look forward to seeing each other again.

Meanwhile, keep safe.



If you have received this newsletter by post and would be happy to receive future editions by email please provide your name, membership number and email address to [networks@crohnsandcolitis.org.uk](mailto:networks@crohnsandcolitis.org.uk).

This will save the network valuable funds which can be used to benefit all those affected by Crohn's and Colitis.

## CONTACT US

**CROHN'S & COLITIS UK**

**SOUTH WEST MIDLANDS & WOLVERHAMPTON NETWORK**

Lead Volunteer: Samantha Lawrence

Email: [swmw@networks.crohnsandcolitis.org.uk](mailto:swmw@networks.crohnsandcolitis.org.uk)

Website: [www.crohnsandcolitis.org.uk/swmw](http://www.crohnsandcolitis.org.uk/swmw)



Crohn's & Colitis UK South West Midlands & Wolverhampton Network



CrohnsColitisMW

## GENERAL ENQUIRIES

**Crohn's & Colitis UK**

1 Bishops Square, Hatfield Business Park, AL10 9NE

[www.crohnsandcolitis.org.uk/contact](http://www.crohnsandcolitis.org.uk/contact)

**Volunteer Enquires: 01727 734 475**

Charity registered in England Number 1117148 Charity registered in Scotland Number SC038632

A company limited by guarantee in England: company number 5973370

## HELPLINE

Our helpline is a confidential service providing information and support for anyone affected by Crohn's or Colitis.

Our team can:

- help you understand more about Crohn's or Colitis, diagnosis and treatment options
- provide information to help you to live well with your condition
- help you understand and access disability benefits
- be there to listen if you need someone to talk to
- put you in touch with a trained support volunteer who has a personal experience of Crohn's or Colitis and understands what you are going through

## CONTACT US BY:

**Telephone: 0300 222 5700\***

Monday to Friday - 9am to 5pm

**Email: [helpline@crohnsandcolitis.org.uk](mailto:helpline@crohnsandcolitis.org.uk)**

**Live Chat: [www.crohnsandcolitis.org.uk/livechat](http://www.crohnsandcolitis.org.uk/livechat)**

\*Calls to this number are charged at a standard landline rate or may be free if you have an inclusive minutes' package.

Calls may be recorded for monitoring and evaluation

purposes. Please refer to our [website](#) for Helpline Christmas Opening hours

The South West Midlands & Wolverhampton Network has made every reasonable effort to ensure the content of this newsletter is accurate, but accepts no responsibility for any errors or omission. The views of the contributors do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of Crohn's & Colitis UK and no reference in this newsletter to any product or service is intended as a recommendation.