

## **Notes on Thanet Diabetes Community Self Care Group Zoom meeting 4<sup>th</sup> August 2022**

Attendees were: John, Brad, Brian, Alicia, and Jeremy. Apologies were received from Anne who was returning from a trip, and Maxine who had problems connecting.

Brad welcomed the participants and asked John to give a summary of last month's meeting. John was attending from London and did not have the notes available, but did recall Jeremy's presentation was very informative, especially the three Excel sheets at the end listing the food values of many everyday foods.

The main focus of the meeting was the sharing of life and diabetes experiences from the attendees. John kicked off with a short account of how he was diagnosed with diabetes and what happened then. He had visited a friend in Ireland and noticed he was much skinnier than he had been the last time they had met. His friend said he had developed diabetes and had been told to lose weight or spend the rest of his life on drugs. He chose to lose weight and had possibly gone too far, but had managed to get to a diagnosis of pre-diabetes after the weight loss. When John returned to the UK he asked his GP for a blood check which confirmed diabetes and was also told to lose weight, and was recommended the 'Blood Sugar Diet' by Michael Mosely as a good way to lose weight and cut out carbs. After a few months his weight went from 112 Kg to 90 Kg and was then confirmed as pre-diabetic. His diet now consists of 'normal' food interspersed with bouts of low carb eating when the weight looks like it is rising again. So far this has worked at keeping the diabetes at bay, and he does a fair amount of exercise, including sea swimming, walks and exercise machines when the weather is inclement.

Alicia spoke next. She told us that she was confined to a wheel chair, probably till February or March next year. She was able to get around the house and go shopping in the car and so on, but was desperately in need of physiotherapy to keep the muscles and bones alive. She had found NHS services sadly lacking and she was prepared to self-fund private care, but this could run to £3,000 a week so not a long-term solution. She was very scared of breaking her leg again. Brian recommended one of THM associates, Eric, who he had started using lately and he had made a great difference. Alicia said she would be happy to be put in touch with him. She went on to tell us that her father and grandfather both had type 1 diabetes. She thought insulin injections had started in 1921 and they remain the main treatment for this diabetes. She found insulin caused her to put on weight, even though she maintains a very low carb diet and avoids sugars. She said insulin is now packaged with a steroid which may contribute to the weight gain. Her sugar levels used to be 161 but she got it down to 46 and the level now is around 70. She suspected that female type 1 diabetics had greater weight gain than the males, and she is very conscious of her weight. Her eye specialists want to inject her eyes with a chemical to slow down the chances of blindness, but the procedure could make eyesight worse initially, and one in a thousand go blind immediately after the injection – odds she didn't like. She also runs the risk of needing one leg removed and a couple of healthy teeth due to gum problems. She thought there was a lot more research being done on type 2 diabetes, but the pharmaceutical companies had no incentive to cure either sort, rather to keep the pills coming. But on the other hand, she is very positive and hopeful of the future.

Brian brought up hypos and Alicia said she had several in the previous week and they take days to recover from. She really appreciated the support of her family who keep her spirits up. Brian said he felt she had a very positive outlook on life, and was a great example of self-care.

Jeremy kicked off with a plug for the Public Health Collaboration and their recent conference on food addiction, with video available on YouTube. He promised to prepare presentations on food addiction for the diabetes group. He pointed out it is not recognised as a WHO condition yet. On a personal level he mentioned there are foods he stays away from, from strawberries to bread, which

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cause eczema and other conditions. He eats a lot of meat and eggs, a bit of fruit and few vegetables. He told a someone with retinopathy who moved to a meat heavy diet and he recovered, but this was only a single anecdote. He said he now had four world records for his rowing machine sessions. Alicia said she had a rowing machine but couldn't use it because of her leg. Jeremy wondered if the machine could be modified. She was a bit wary of using it at all, with the thought of a broken leg again. Jeremy urged her to eat more animal protein to boost her system, and suggested the difference between organic and other meat in the UK was small, so eating only expensive meat was not necessary, especially for beef. He was less sure about pork, and free-range chickens certainly tasted better than battery hens.

The discussion moved on our lack of members. Alicia used to be a member of the Diabetes UK Thanet group. John said it closed several years ago. Brian recalled that Diabetes UK wanted us to take it over but we felt its aims and controlling nature were not compatible. Initially we had some members join us, but they didn't like the Zoom nature of the meetings and didn't return. Alicia felt the small size of the group encouraged people to talk more freely.

Brian then pressed Brad to talk about his food addictions. He admitted to liking chocolates occasionally, fizzy drinks, fruit squash and crisps. He said he had rejected salads since Brian told him they were hard to digest, but was moving towards soups.

Brian offered to do a presentation of his prescription drugs and supplements, which the group agreed would be interesting.

Brad offered us the benefits of eating sweetcorn and peas. He will update the website presentation of all these foods in due course.

Next meeting is 5pm on September 1st and the agenda will be on the website closer to the time.

<http://diabetesthanet.uk>

or

<http://authentik.co.uk/diabetesthanet>