

MNDA Autumn Newsletter | Falling into Autumn Together

Hello everyone!

As the leaves turn golden and the air gets crisp, our MNDA community continues to shine with warmth and dedication. I'm thrilled to share the latest updates, inspiring stories, and upcoming events with you. Together, we're making a difference every step of the way.

MNDA News Update

Saturday 4 October

Talk by Dorit Olivere-Wolff - holocaust survivor

Eastbourne Football Club

[Christoper Westcott JustGiving](#)

Saturday 11th October 12.30 – 2.30 pm

Next Support Group Meeting Lewes

Halloween Walk - London

Saturday 25 October

[Halloween Walk](#)

Fundraising Highlights

Save the Dates MNDA Comedy

9th October – Mid Sussex Golf Club

Get ready to laugh for a great cause!

Join us for an unforgettable **Comedy Night** hosted by the hilarious **Anthony Ayton** as compere, alongside **three top-tier comedians** from the UK professional circuit – hand-picked to deliver a night full of belly laughs.

- Radu Isac - Has appeared on BBC, Channel 4 and Comedy Central "Intelligently Subversive" - The Scotsman
- James Redmond - Well known for his seminal parts in Hollyoaks and Casualty
- Michael Fabbri - Winner of English comedian of the year - Tour support for Mickey Flannagan, Lucy Porter and Angela Barnes.

Whether you're coming for the **side-splitting stand-up** or making a night of it with a delicious **chicken or vegetable curry**, you're in for a treat.

 **Comedy**

 **Curry**

 **All profits go to the Motor Neurone Disease Association**

To buy tickets for Mid Sussex Golf, **click on the comedy website link below**

So bring your mates, grab a drink, and enjoy a cracking night out – all while supporting a brilliant cause.

Don't miss it – laughter really is the best medicine!

 Mid Sussex get tickets here [Website – MNDA Comedy](#)

25th October – Brighton College

Join us for an unforgettable **Comedy Night** hosted by the hilarious **Anthony Ayton** as compere, alongside **three top-class comedians** from the UK professional circuit – hand-picked to deliver a night full of belly laughs.

- Ben Norris - Mock The Week, The Comedy Store on Paramount and Comedy Central , Never Mind the Buzzcocks.
- Paul F Taylor - Russell Howard's Good News "More people should know about him" The Metro
- Julian Deane - Award winning British stand up comedian and writer.

So, bring your mates, grab a drink, and enjoy a cracking night out – all while supporting a brilliant cause.

Don't miss it – laughter really is the best medicine!

How to Purchase Tickets for Brighton College Events

Tickets for Brighton College events can be bought through their official booking office,

Choose seats from an interactive map

Check real-time availability

Select accessible seating if needed

****Wheelchair Access:**** Accessible seating for wheelchair users is marked on the booking platform and accommodates companions.

Direct link to the [Brighton Box Office](#), where you can select your seat and complete your booking:



[Brighton Box Office – Seat Selection](#)

25th November – Chasley Trust

11th December – Mid Sussex Golf Club (Christmas Special)

19th December – Brighton College (Christmas Special)

Stories to inspire – MND Branch Volunteers



Elsa Gillio AV

I first came across the MND Association's **Association Visitor (AV)** service when my husband was diagnosed with MND. At that time, everything felt so uncertain, but having an AV by my side was a lifeline. She understood in a way that no one else could, and her reassurance gave me the strength I needed. I remember thinking that if I ever got the chance, I would want to do that for someone else.

That's what led me to volunteering. I won't pretend I wasn't nervous at first. Before my first visit, I kept asking myself, 'Will I be good enough? will I help? Luckily, I was able to shadow another AV and, by the time I started supporting my own family, I felt ready to take that step.

My visits are simple yet meaningful, usually just a cup of tea, perhaps some cake, and lots of conversation. Sometimes it's just listening, and sometimes it's helping with practical things, such as pointing people towards grants or support. Many people are hesitant to accept financial help, but part of my role is to gently remind them that this support is there for a reason.

The most rewarding part is seeing how sharing my own experience can give someone hope. I'll never forget how much it meant when my AV told me, "You will get through this. It won't be easy, but you will." She was right, and now I find myself passing on that same reassurance to others. If I can bring even a little light into someone's darkest moments, that's worth everything.

There are challenges, of course, but we're never alone. The support within the AV team is incredible, and the friendships we've formed are something very special. We always say the only good thing about MND is the people you meet, and I truly believe that.

One memory that stays with me is of a gentleman called Mick. He had Kennedy's disease and had lost his voice for many years. After cancer treatment, his voice came back, and he proudly introduced himself with, "My name is Mick, and I have my voice back." It was a truly beautiful moment; he was able to speak again in the final weeks of his life.

Volunteering has changed me for the better. It's a privilege to be part of someone's journey, and as long as the MND Association needs volunteers, I'll be here. If you're thinking about it too, let's have a coffee and a chat. You might find, like me, that it's one of the most meaningful things you'll ever do.



Justin Anderson AV

When Justin Anderson began looking for ways to give back to the community, he came across the opportunity to volunteer with MNDA AV. Having cared for his brother and mother until their passing in 2009, Justin wanted to continue supporting others and channel his experience into something meaningful.

Although he had no personal connection to Motor Neurone Disease at the time, Justin's research quickly revealed how complex and life-changing MND can be. It struck me as both a challenging and rewarding opportunity, he recalls.

Justin still remembers the nerves before his very first visit. I had no idea what to expect, he admits. But the lady I met was so welcoming that I immediately felt at home. That encounter left such an impression that he wrote about it as soon as he returned home, an early sign of the inspiration this role would bring.

Today, Justin's visits are tailored to each person's circumstances. They are often conversational and supportive, providing space for people living with MND and their families to talk openly. Sometimes, he explains, there are things clients want to share but prefer not to trouble their families with. His support also extends to carers, who value having someone to listen to them as well.

While communication can be a challenge, particularly as people adapt to different aids and technologies, Justin has learned that patience and attentive listening are key. You also have to be comfortable in moments of silence, he says.

For Justin, the most rewarding part of volunteering is the people he meets. I've come across so many remarkable individuals whose strength and bravery are inspirational. The sense of community among clients, families, volunteers, and health professionals is incredibly special. Reflecting on his journey, Justin says volunteering has changed his own outlook: The power of community is like a blanket, helping to keep you warm and secure. It grounds you and makes you appreciate what you have.

His advice to anyone thinking about volunteering with MNDA AV is simple: Please do it. The people you support, and their families, will give so much back to your life.

Remembering Loved Ones

This autumn, we pause to honour those we've lost in recent months:

- Lorraine Somerville
- Davis Baker
- John Harwood
- Mrs Aileen Moffatt

Their courage and love will remain a guiding light for us all.

A Note of Thanks

As we approach the festive season, let's carry forward the spirit of kindness and determination that makes this community so special. Whether you walk, bake, run, sing, or simply share a kind word, you are part of this journey.

Thank you for standing with MNDA.

Warmly,

Rona Stephens-Hill

MNDA Newsletter Editor

Useful Links

[MNDA East Sussex Website](#)

[Just Giving](#)

[Website – MNDA Comedy](#)

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