**25% ME GROUP**

**(SUPPORT FOR SEVERE ME SUFFERERS)**

**NINTH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

**TO BE HELD ON 1st SEPTEMBER 2014**

**CHAIRMAN’S REPORT**

As a charity, we continue to take a leading role on behalf of the severely affected ME sufferer. This is not just to promote our charity, but to also highlight issues and the needs of the severely affected to statutory, voluntary and various other organisations throughout the UK.

Our membership and supporters play a leading role in influencing the direction of the charity and even though many are very sick and disabled, they are passionate about being involved in making sure that the charity is influencing others about their plight and making the charity a success.

**GROUP DEVELOPMENTS**

As stated in the previous Report, we have had to rely on core funding and some smaller grants and donations from various individuals and organisations, these funds have allowed us to continue to employ the advocacy worker and the administrator for the group and this allowed us to continue to achieve a wider range of services for our members and provide them with much-needed practical assistance in order that they continue to reside independently within their own homes. The Group’s Advocacy Worker is in high demand for the service particularly in light of the benefit reforms taking place at the moment. This has proved to be a well utilised service and we are very pleased to be able to offer this exclusive service to our members.

Salaries and all other expenditure continue to be met from core funds. At present the annual expenditure for running the charity i.e. salaries, rent and general running costs is approximately £1000 per week. Although, this is now financed out of core funds, we feel it is important in order to carry out, as well as the services mentioned above, other vital functions within the group and its operations, especially allowing us to continue to attend more conferences and seminars organised by the Department for Work and Pensions, Social Work Department, local health authorities, various local and regional M.E. Support Groups and other voluntary agencies dealing with disability issues.

**CAMPAIGNING**

*M.E. AWARENESS WEEK MAY 2014*: ME Awareness Packs to members, carers, 300 ME Networks and support organisations, as well as online ME related message boards. We also contacted many MPs and MSPs with letter concerning the plight of ME sufferers, especially in the light of government changes to benefits etc

**FUNDRAISING**

Various fundraising events and initiatives were organised throughout the year, producing greeting and Christmas cards, attendance at car-boot sales, to hiring of stalls at local fairs and coffee mornings.

These ventures proved to be extremely popular and fruitful for the Group particularly with regard to local recognition and development.

Special thanks go to all Group Members who donated funds and participated in numerous fundraising events and activities

**FUTURE PLANS**

**AWARENESS DAY FOR THE SEVERLY AFFECTED**

We are pleased and proud to announce the launch of another initiative to help raise awareness of the severely affected, through having a separate Awareness Day, aimed specifically at the severely affected. This will be held on the 8th August of each year