

# YOUR COMMUNITY NEWS



Members of the Frimley Park Hospital IBD patient support group welcomed guest speaker Sam Thomson, who delivered an interactive talk on mental health and IBD

## Meeting has a feelgood factor

A HOSPITAL'S patient support group was given a mental workout when it met at Farnborough Rugby Club last Wednesday.

Around 30 members of the Frimley Park Hospital IBD support group welcomed Sam Thomson, from Brighton, to talk about mental health and wellbeing.

Sam is the founder of Hexagon Hive, which supports a number of companies, and The Wellbeing Hive, which works with schools, childcare settings and parents to support children and their communities.

In what turned out to be a more interactive evening than many might have imagined, Sam asked those attending to work in small groups and use their own experiences to try and define what mental health, mental wellbeing and mental illness meant to them. This got the room talking and proved that sharing thoughts and feelings with others can help to lighten the load.

Being diagnosed with either Crohn's Disease or Ulcerative Colitis can be debilitating and life-chang-

ing for most, which can cause stress, anxiety and depression.

Further group activities focused on the many day-to-day things that can affect someone's mental health and the early warning signs, as well as ways of coping and seeking support and guidance.

Group chairman Jane Freebairn, said: "Sam got us to think about how our feelings affect our closest family and friends, and then work colleagues and those who we might come into contact with on an ad hoc basis. We might not be so close to them, but they can also get caught up in the ripple effect.

"The main message was that mental wellbeing is a balancing act.

"Like IBD, it is an individual process of concentrating on the things which make us feel good and resisting or keeping in check the feelings that make us anxious.

"It's fair to say that we all have different views on dealing with mental wellbeing. Whatever you think, it's another challenging aspect of IBD. Being a member of our support



Sam (standing) led the discussion with the group

group and talking about your diagnosis and sharing experiences has got to be a good place to start."

The group aims to meet again informally next month before its main September gathering. For

more information about the group, visit <https://frimleyibdgroup.co.uk/> or see its Facebook page.



Hart Voices will celebrate the music of Abba to finish its 50th anniversary year at Victoria Hall, in Hartley Wintney, on Saturday July 1

ANDY TEO

## Scandinavian night a fun climax for choir

JOIN Hart Voices for an evening celebrating the music of Abba, Benny and Bjorn, and a host of other Scandinavian choral delights in a performance at Victoria Hall, in Hartley Wintney, on Saturday July 1.

The choir will say Thank You for the Music to conclude its golden 50th anniversary year, with the performance beginning at 7.30pm.

Conducted by Roy Rashbrook, the singers will present a laid-back and fun programme of some favourite Abba hits, along with music from Chess and Frozen, plus some other special choral arrangements sung in Swedish.

Tickets, which are on sale now, are priced £17, or £6 for under-16s. They can be bought at <https://thankyouformusic.eventbrite.co.uk>