

# *Mo Shaol*



Prehistoric Stone Row, Gurrane, Co. Cork

## **MS Ireland Mission:**

To enable and empower people affected by Multiple Sclerosis to live the life of their choice to their fullest potential

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# Dia Dhaoibh! Hello there!

## Standing Stones in West Cork.

These are three of what were originally five very tall stones set in a row near Castletownsend, Co.

Cork. They are over four metres in height. One stone is gone completely and another has fallen flat. They dominate the surrounding landscape.

Stone rows like this are up to 3,000 to 4,000 years old. Why were they erected? What did the people who went to great effort to erect them think? We don't know the answer to these questions.

What we do know is that those who put them up strove hard to achieve their aim, and it was a community effort.

So it is in dealing with a disease like MS – those who have it, and their families, strive to live life as fully as possible.

The committee of the South Mayo Branch of MS Ireland works to help people with MS in our area in their daily struggles with life. We are here for **you**.

Tony Candon PRO



## *Welcome to Geraldine Kubernat*

As we say goodbye to Mags Ryan, we welcome Geraldine Kubernat, who takes over as Regional Community Worker for Mayo and Roscommon in Mags' place.

Geraldine has over 25 years' experience working in healthcare, mostly as an occupational therapist. She has worked in both the UK and Ireland, and most of her work has been in the community, supporting clients and facilitating them to live as independently as possible.

Geraldine works 3 days a week, Monday to Wednesday. She can be contacted on 087 2502 031 (Mags' old number) or her email is geraldinek@ms-society.ie.

## Annual General Meeting 2022

The Annual General Meeting of the South Mayo Branch of MS Ireland will take place at **7:30 p.m. on Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2022**. The meeting will take place virtually, on Zoom, as it will not be possible for people to meet in person.

You will find details of how to join the meeting via Zoom on page 3. We do hope you can join us.

## Goodbye to Mags Ryan

It was with regret and some sadness that we said goodbye to Mags Ryan a little while ago. Mags has left to pursue a new career as a counsellor.

Mags was the dedicated and hard-working Regional Community Worker serving people with MS in counties Mayo and Roscommon since 2008. She was liked and respected by all who came into contact with her, and will be missed. She was a great support to us in the South Mayo Branch. We wish her well in her new career.



# Annual General Meeting

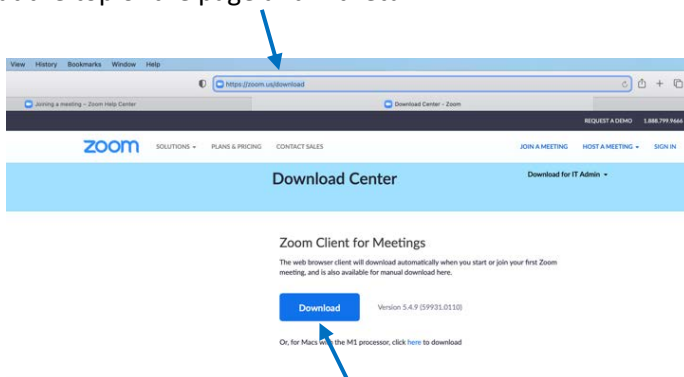
The Annual General Meeting of the Branch will take place *via Zoom* on Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> February at 7:30 p.m.

In order to take part, you will first need to let us know via e-mail that you want to join. Send your e-mail to [carolmillingtonpratt@gmail.com](mailto:carolmillingtonpratt@gmail.com).

You will then be sent an e-mail inviting you to join the meeting via Zoom. That e-mail will contain a **Meeting ID number**. You will also need Zoom installed on your phone/tablet/laptop/computer.

## 1. Download Zoom to your device

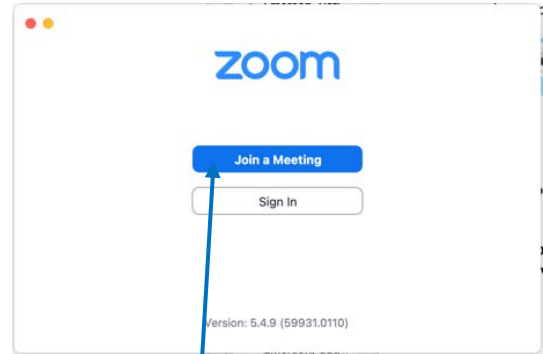
- **Open the internet on your device**
- Type <https://zoom.us/download> in the address bar at the top of the page and hit return



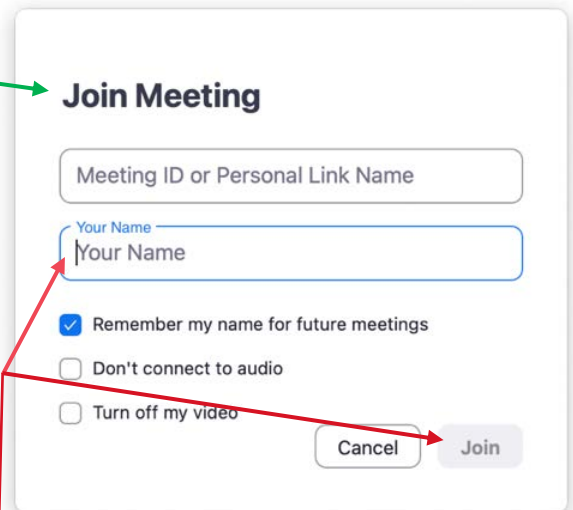
- Click or tap the blue download button
- Follow the instructions to install the programme on your device

## 2. Join Zoom Meeting

- **Open Zoom**  
This window will appear:



Click or tap Join a Meeting – this will open another small window that says Join Meeting



- Type the Meeting ID number in the upper box
- Type your name in the lower box and click or tap Join.

- Do **NOT** tick Don't connect to audio.  
Do **NOT** tick Turn off my video
- After that, follow the instructions on the screen.

# MS Ireland Video Catalogue

MS Ireland has a series of videos and webinars from leading speakers in the fields of Multiple Sclerosis, neurology, physiotherapy and exercise, along with many others. You can find these on the MS Ireland website:

<https://www.ms-society.ie/what-we-do/video-catalogue>

- ◇ COVID-19 videos
- ◇ Newly Diagnosed Programme
- ◇ Progressive MS
- ◇ SPMS Video series
- ◇ Symptom Management series
- ◇ Life with MS video series

Contact [aoifek@ms-society.ie](mailto:aoifek@ms-society.ie) or [thomasm@ms-society.ie](mailto:thomasm@ms-society.ie)

## E-mail Addresses & Contact Details

We all know how important it is for our family and friends to be able to contact us. It is also important that the services we use have our correct contact details.

Carol has brought to my attention that a number of emails with formal notification of the Branch AGM were not delivered because the email addresses were no longer valid.

We would ask any of you who have changed postal address or email address recently to let us know so that we can still communicate with you, if you want us to. If you would prefer not to hear from us, that's fine, too, **but** - we would like you to let us know if this is the case.

You may be aware that the cost of postage has gone up, yet again! We are, of course, happy to contact you by post but it would help save on costs if we could do so via email. Please contact Carol to update your details:  
[carolmillingtonpratt@gmail.com](mailto:carolmillingtonpratt@gmail.com).

## Draw for Nativity Pictures

Over the last couple of Christmases, Liam Cannon has organized a draw for a knitted crib in his Fruit & Veg Shop in Castlebar. This year, the draw was for a total of six framed diamond-painted images of the Nativity. They were made by Pauline Kean, who also made the knitted cribs. There are two different pictures and three of each. Each consists of some 11,000 pieces and took 15 hours to make.

Altogether, between sale and raffles in Liam's shop, the Curiosity Shop, Westport, and Hollymount Store, the pictures raised €1,763.10 for the Branch. The winners of the draw were Mary Barrett, Islandeady; Mary Connolly, Castlebar, and Rose Kirrane, Castlebar.

Cannon's fruit & Veg Shop also contributed €905 from the sale of calendars and Christmas cards, and €726 from the counter-top donation box. Ballintubber Store contributed €150 through the sale of cards and calendars.

In addition, Moya Corrigan of Castlebar contributed €80 on behalf of four ladies, money in lieu of Christmas gifts, while Mary Lavin of Keelcoil, Breaffy gave €150.

The Branch is very grateful to all who contributed so generously.



# Online Services available to people with MS

One of the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic was that it confined many people to their homes and cut them off from the normal contacts they would have had with other people, including family members. It also meant that many people were cut off from the services they would normally have used by attending in person or by having someone come to them.

Covid-19 also prevented organisations from providing the services they normally offered to people in person, either in groups or one-to-one. MS Ireland, along with so many other organisations and businesses, adapted by taking these online. This means that people can now access these services via their computer, laptop, tablet or smartphone.



Of course, not everyone uses a computer or laptop, but most people now have a smartphone; this means that you can use your phone for greater access to the world generally and to access services that previously were available only in person.

MS Ireland now offers a variety of its services online.

**Digital Literacy Course** – This is aimed at individuals with devices like laptops, smart phones, or tablets who do not have the confidence in using them but would like to participate more in the digital world.

**Age Action Ireland** has also developed a very useful and easy-to-use toolkit to help you get started and get comfortable with it. Go to



<https://www.ageaction.ie/how-we-can-help/getting->

[started-kit](#). Maybe a family member can help you.

**Time to chat** – 11am Thursdays on Zoom, an informal space for people with MS to come together and connect with each other.

**Online Physiotherapy** – classes currently take place on Tuesdays; based on an assessment, people are assigned to a class that suits their goals and ability.

Times are morning, afternoon and evening.



**Online Meditation group** – Mondays 11am – 12pm this takes place in cycles of 10 weeks

**Online Yoga** – Wednesday afternoon and evening, Thursday evening and Friday morning in cycles of 10 weeks

**Progressive MS Webinar series** – These webinars took place throughout 2021 and are available to download from the MS Ireland website: <https://www.ms-society.ie/what-we-do/video-catalogue>.

**For information about taking part in any or all of the above, contact Geraldine on (087) 2502 031, Email: [geraldinek@ms-society.ie](mailto:geraldinek@ms-society.ie)**

**Move Smart MS** is a national specialist physio programme offering specialist input based on specific symptom management, e.g. balance, newly diagnosed, couch to 5K etc. Contact [susanc@ms-society.ie](mailto:susanc@ms-society.ie) These are run also in cycles and are recruited nationally.



# Funds: Raising and Spending

As you will be aware, the Branch puts a lot of effort into fund-raising on an on-going basis and we rely on supporters and donors for much of our funding.

## Where does that money get spent?

At a collective level, we organise a number of social outings a year (or we did, until Covid-19 prevented this!). These have included Christmas lunch, trips to places like Bridget's Garden near Moycullen, Co. Galway, a day's shopping in Galway and to events like Soulfeast. If the threat from Covid-19 recedes, we may be able to do this again in the near future.

At the individual level, we provide assistance in many ways. We fund physiotherapy and yoga classes, as well as other therapies and alternative treatments. We contribute to the costs of home help, care and nursing, particularly where people may fall through the cracks in state provision. We also help with fuel costs.

In addition, we assist in the purchase of necessary therapeutic equipment for individuals who need it and we also help with the costs of making adaptations to the homes of people whose MS condition requires this.

In all of this, we are guided by the advice of the Regional Community Worker – Mags Ryan until recently, and now Geraldine Kubernat.

And, we help in other ways, too. We cover the cost of members attending the Annual General Meeting of MS Ireland and we assist with the cost of people staying the Respite Centre in Bushy Park.

To do all of this, we rely on the generosity of the people of west and south Mayo who support our activities and fund-raisers. Like many other charities, we rely heavily on our annual church gate collection which usually takes place on the first weekend in March. We were lucky in 2020 to have had our collection before the first pandemic lockdown, but we lost out last year and will do again this year; perhaps, in 2023, we can resume our church gate collection.

We thank the people of Mayo who support us so generously. We also thank those who fund-raise on our behalf in so many different ways. We could not do it without you.



One of our most consistently generous supporters in recent years has been the Curiosity Shop in Westport. Yet again, in December, they presented us with a cheque for €3,000. Committee member Ger Butler accepted the cheque from Melissa Hoban on behalf of the Branch.

We also recently received €334 from Tesco Ireland's Community fund. We are grateful to both.

# Zebrafish are making a splash

Zebrafish, named for their black and white stripes, are helping us answer some big questions about MS. Dr Carl Tucker, Aquatics Facilities Manager at the University of Edinburgh, tells us about the work he does to look after these tiny fish.

At the University of Edinburgh, we have over 3,500 fish tanks, which are home to tens of thousands of zebrafish.

Zebrafish are pretty unique. At five days old, a zebrafish embryo is only 5mm long but is practically a complete fish with all its major organs.

Unlike humans, they can regenerate all their organs - even the heart! But for scientists, the best thing about zebrafish is that the embryos are almost completely transparent. So you see all the processes going on inside their bodies, like myelin repair, which is vital to stopping MS.



## Sharing our DNA with fish

It might seem surprising that fish can help us understand human conditions like MS, but we actually share approximately 70% of our DNA with zebrafish. We can find out a lot of important information just from looking at individual cells in a lab, but we really need to know how all these cells interact with each other. And for that, you need a living organism.

I work closely with Professor David Lyons, a researcher based here at the University of Edinburgh. He's doing some brilliant research on zebrafish and MS. And our zebrafish are also used to study all sorts of other conditions, like heart disease, various cancers and kidney function, to name a few.

## Zebrafish and MS

One pioneering project David is leading is a new drug-testing platform at the [MS Society Edinburgh Centre for MS Research](#). The platform will use robots to screen thousands of potential MS treatments on zebrafish with an MS-like condition, which could help find treatments faster. He's also looking at how myelin debris, which is left after an immune attack, is cleared in the brains of zebrafish. By testing the effect of different drugs on the rate of clean-up, David and his team aim to identify potential myelin repair treatments for MS.

## Good science needs good animal welfare

We take the welfare of our fish very seriously. In fact, at Edinburgh, there's an entire department dedicated to the care of research animals. The UK's laws around animal research are among the most stringent in the world.

## Taking care of our zebrafish

Our zebrafish are fed three times a day with a special balanced diet, and the water quality is constantly monitored to make sure it's ideal at all times.

Under UK law all experimental procedures must assess the possible harms to an animal. The vast majority of procedures are considered mild - this means the impact on the fish is minimal. If it's possible that pain may occur, we let the fish swim about in a bath of a liquid containing anaesthetic, which they take in through their gills.

I know some people find it peculiar that fish are used for medical research, but if we want to stop conditions like MS, we need animals to help us understand them. I love my job, because we're working to help people living with painful and debilitating conditions.

*Adapted from a slightly longer article on the UK's MS Society's webpage*



We offer our condolences to the family of the late Judy Morrison of Westport who died in 2021. *Ar dheis Dé go raibh a hanam dilis*

## Annual General Meeting 2022 Reminder

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## Committee Members, South Mayo Branch MS Ireland, 2021

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Duncan Pratt	094-9364 875 duncanmillingtonpratt@gmail.com	Vice-Chair Welfare Committee Member
Carol Millington Pratt	087-2754 628 carolmillingtonpratt@gmail.com	Secretary
Yvonne Corrigan	087-2830 652 jycorrigan@eircom.net	Assistant Secretary
Sharon Dillon	087-6827 036 sharonfdillon@gmail.com	Treasurer Welfare Committee Member
Damen Barrett	087-7676 348 dbarrett@mayococo.ie	Assistant Treasurer Welfare Committee Member
Tony Candon	087-2685 071 candonanthony@gmail.com	Committee Member PRO
Ger Butler	butlger@gmail.com	Committee Member
Patricia Cannon	094-9024 429 patsy.cannon61@gmail.com	Committee Member
Lynn Candon	087-2123 711 lynncondon@gmail.com	Committee Member

Regional Community Worker:

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