

NCT CHESTER BRANCH

AMM Minutes 10/11/11

Attendees:

Michelle Collins, Jane Collier, Caroline Swan, Rachel Jones, Emma Young, Catherine Jones, Lisa Brocklehurst, Lynn Thompson, Adele Bentley, Julie Smith, Emma Savage, Di Langhorn, Ilmarie Bennett, Amy Opperman, Liz Tweddle, Cath Auty, Laura Edwards, Carrie Littlehales, Nikki Edge, Jennie Stevenson.

Welcome and Introductions

NCT Vision

- To offer information and support in pregnancy, childbirth and early parenthood
- To campaign to improve maternity care and ensure better services and facilities for new parents
- To aim to give every parent the chance to make informed choices
- To make sure that everyone has access to NCT services and activities

Local Branch Picture

- Promotes the work and the values of the National Childbirth Trust, promotes membership and retains members
- Chester is a medium sized branch with around 170 members
- Represents parents on relevant local bodies and campaigns locally in support of the charity's aims
- Aims to create a network of local parents to gain practical and emotional support and make friends
- Raises funds to support the charity's activities
- Builds good relations with other relevant charity's and other community organisations as appropriate
- Must:
 - Have a core committee consisting of (at least) Branch Co-ordinator, Treasurer, Membership Secretary, Branch Parent Support Co-ordinator
 - Provide a newsletter
 - Fundraise to pay expenses
 - Run Parent to Parent Events
 - Attend Regional Training Events

Minutes of the Last AMM (23/11/10)

Not typed due to Jane's twins' birth. Powerpoint slides accepted in lieu and all actions agreed.

Review of Wish List

- Provide local peer support through regular meet ups and coffee mornings = achieved via Bumps & Babes
- Provide accessible services such as breast pump, valley cushion hire = up & running
- Bra fitting service = challenge with the training and stock holding requirements
- Campaign for improved local services = success for local IVF service campaign
- Raise the profile within the communities in the area = success in increasing volunteer numbers, facebook page likes, more people attending NNS etc.
- Improve process and communication within the team of volunteers = success in improved attendance at meeting, email correspondence
- Liaise with local health childrens service professionals
- Breastfeeding friendly = scheme up and running
- Increase support from local business
- Hold more Children's parties
- Increase social activities such as pamper evenings

- Call new mums around their due date to identify any special needs and signpost services = attendance at n at NCT classes and adding to email circulation list
- Hold a specific baby fair to build on relations with local business = not completed due to good relations in this area locally

Review of 2011 Activity

Chairs' Summary

One of the other objectives was to break the branch into teams to share workload and spread the responsibility so that volunteers can step away as needed for their personal needs.

Michelle took over NNS, advertising, fund raising, inbox activity and developed teams, a good example of this is the NNS or NatChat team which has been so successful. Moving the NNS location has worked really well and addressed all the concerns with the previous site. Achieved the NCT Gold Standard this year in recognition of the level of organisation and success of the Nearly New Sales. Thank you to everyone who has been involved with the sales.

Council feedback from Childrens Centre representatives has been positive. Bumps & Babes team has also worked well.

Email volume has increased significantly with nearly 10 emails each day to the main account alone and most emails are now responded to within 48 hours.

Nat Chat is now a really high quality publication with great team work and a lot interest in advertisements from local businesses.

Visiting the NCT classes has also worked well and will continue.

Emma S committed to running regular monthly activities such as walks and visiting family friendly places.

Chester branch contributing significantly to the national NCT pot through fundraising and NatChat now covers own costs. Chester Branch also donated some money to the web development as there was more work needed nationally than had been anticipated or budgeted for this has helped to increase communication nationally.

Jane has been responsible for the MLSC and is seeking an additional representative with recent experience and able to take feedback from a service user back to the Countess. Also great result in campaigning for the local IVF services which helped to raise the profile of the consultation to the correct target audience and prevented abolition of IVF services without proper consultation within the Chester area.

Social Groups (Jane)

Bumps and Babes: New group set up through the Kingsway Childrens centre which has been really successful and thanks to everyone who attends and volunteers. Around 6-12 children attending which is providing value support for new parents. Amy has been brilliant in providing refreshments – much appreciated.

NCT Dads Group: also through the Kingsway Childrens centre is a small group but a valuable service for fathers. Meeting has been requested by the Childrens Centre teams on 16th November and a representative from the current Bumps & Babes team would be welcome. Childrens Centre staffing cuts could well be an issue going forward as there have been significant reductions in the budget.

Financial Results (Caroline)

Raised £5.5k this year – slightly less than last year due to reduced number of events

Raised £2k at all three of the NNS in the past year despite reducing the commission levels this was offset in part by requesting a minimum sales level of £80-£90 and introducing a deposit for sellers places which has reduced drop out. 77 sellers booked for the October sale of which only 4 cancelled

Skim back from the Branch Account to the National NCT has been completed each quarter to ensure that Chester do not exceed the agreed limit of cash that branches are allowed in the bank.

NatChat completely covered printing and distribution costs through advertising revenues with a small surplus.

PR (Carrie)

Carrie took over the new PR role as part of the wish list to increase local awareness of the NCT and maximise the free opportunities available. The plan for this year is to meet with local papers to increase profile however the posters seem to be the most successful way of advertising the NNS and other events.

Contact list is being built up of email addresses and poster locations. Any suggestions should be sent through to Carrie.

Focus in July was publicising the new location for the NNS and October focus was on increasing seller numbers. In addition Carrie was able to get a great article in the Chronicle focusing on the environmental aspect of the NNS.

Nearly New Sale 2012 (Rachel)

Bishops High School have exams in March and they aren't able to confirm a date as yet but hopefully by the end of the month.

Breastfeeding Friendly Chester (Emma S)

Core goal for the NCT and making great progress. Launched in October and already have 11 venues fully signed up and 10 new venues in progress. There is a national scheme however the costs to set up were prohibitive and aimed mainly at the local NHS and PCT sites. Focus on breastfeeding generally is focused on how it's best for baby not on supporting mums on achieving this in public places. Creating a local scheme has a Chester focus with accurate and relevant information from the survey.

Venues agree to 5 commitments on making breastfeeding parents welcome. They are allowed to display a sticker as well as appear in the directory which lists all the facilities for each venue.

Proving to be fairly time consuming to get in front of the right person and reaching the decision maker. Mainly publishing via the facebook page which has 72 likes and 107 active users.

Initial focus is on family friendly venues such as cafes, restaurants and play centres etc. Marketing to families through the NCT contacts, facebook page and in the e-newsletter. Meeting arranged with the infant feeding coordinator to get the information out to new mums.

What people can do to help – identify potential venues, chat to people about the scheme and increase the visibility.

Initial budget of £300 to set up and have spent £220 on packs to set up venues. Postcards are the next goal to leave at Childrens Centres and other locations to publicise the scheme.

NatChat(Laura)

Covers the postcodes CH1 to CH5 with 3 issues each year, distributing 600 copies to 200 NCT members, antenatal courses and fundraising events. Team has changed over the last 12 months but is now working well with clear responsibilities.

Volunteer to distribute the copies is needed as the current person, Steph, is standing down after 6 ½ years.

Editions are looking fabulous and looking at further increasing the number of colour pages from 12 upwards.

Features list is working well and revised process of obtaining birth announcements. Direct NatChat email address has been launched (nctchesternatchat@yahoo.co.uk) and accessible to all the team.

Advertisers are contacting the team and there is now an option for leaflet inserts rather than adverts as it will be difficult to increase the number of pages without affecting postage. Advertising is reaching around £1200 an issue which is fantastic.

Antenatal Teacher Update (Lynn & Di)

Students have been observing the classes and Jackie is now ready to teach her first course. New venue in Mickle Trafford, next door to the primary school, which is brand new, clean and nice for the parents attending.

NHS contract meeting yesterday and has been extended for its 5th year. This means that Lynn and Di can reach all the parents in Chester regardless of whether or not they pay for the course and all can receive NatChat.

Concern about the impact of the Childrens Centre closures and staffing reductions on the courses available.

Aware of a restructure around a government initiative which has funding - PPBB (Preparing for Pregnancy Birth and Beyond). This includes 6 brackets of areas – including lots on relationships, bonding with your babies as well as the traditional antenatal topics. This will affect how training will be completed but potentially the training of antenatal, postnatal and breastfeeding coordinators might be combined in to a core worker. The core worker training will take a year and allows you to run NHS courses. From this point on you will be able to specialise in certain areas.

Lazy Daisy initiative advertising in Warrington – setting up independently to offer antenatal courses. Companies like this could be competition for the government funding and this could be a turbulent time.

Lynn has got a new job – congratulations – supporting the NCT tutors on a national basis. She will be part of the academic board so will be able to influence course design.

Di retired from her community midwife role in September and has a temporary contract at an antenatal clinic which she is really enjoying.

Christmas Party (Emma Y)

Emma is arranging the party and all 65 tickets gone so the event is now fully booked! Volunteers needed to set up on the day, selling raffle tickets, helping giving out the food and cleaning up.

Party is 3-5pm with setting up from 12 noon onwards. Limited to one adult per child due to fire regulations at the site. Liz is doing well with raffle prizes. Last year the children's presents were a book for around £1 a child so looking for a good present this year.

Didi Dance are there doing a taster session and Water Babies have offered to do a craft activity. There may be options to have more than one activity there as well as seeing Santa. Spotty Pig Craft Café might also be interested in coming along. 9 raffle prizes so far including a number of vouchers. Spa day might be ideal so Amy will check at work if they would provide. Carrie to check on Chester Zoo. Other ideas on prizes which could be offered.

Website Update (Nikki)

Facebook page now has 324 likes and all events are now on there as well as the NCT Chester page. Rainbow Babies now has a page on the nct site as well as Breastfeeding Friendly. New Mums of Chester Group is also publishing events and is a good contact.

E-newsletter is also an option to explore – especially sponsor opportunities which will generate revenue for the branch.

Plan to look at setting up Twitter accounts for the branch and Breastfeeding Friendly Chester.

Rainbow Babies (Emma S)

New group for parents who have lost a baby in mid-late pregnancy or after birth, and have a bump, baby or toddler it has been set up for the third Friday of the month. 3 parents attended the first session but more enquiries since then. Emma S's Health Visitor has some information and Carrie will be offering help on publicising the group.

The Year Ahead

After an extremely busy and successful year Jane is stepping down as Co-Chair tonight, Michelle will also have other commitments and time to volunteer will be limited. The branch has a team of excellent volunteers and Michelle will commit to linking teams together and monitoring the chairs forum and other national information and requests for services coming in and sharing the information with the team. If any volunteers wish to explore running additional fundraisers or services this would be excellent. In advance of the meeting Laura had offered admin assistance and Nikki has offered to help us further develop our "e-newsletters". During the meeting Carrie stepped forward to offer to be Co-Chair which is much appreciated and we can now review how we co-ordinate the branch moving forward. It should also be noted that as the financial year is changing for the NCT it will next end in March 2012 and our next AMM will be held shortly after this time.

What do we want to do in 2012?

Aims for 2012:

- Maintain the current level of activity with the fabulous groups, services and events we should be incredibly proud of the amount of work we are doing within the area and if we can sustain this level of activity we will be providing a high level of service to parents in the CH1 – CH5 area.
- Increase the use of technology to broadcast the good work that we are doing and to help increase interest in the branch to hopefully engage more parents who may in turn volunteer.
- Local Volunteers register would also be useful to highlight who has available time and the skills as only a few roles can see who has listed themselves as a volunteer under the national system. Using the central volunteer registration system will be beneficial to volunteers as they will be subject to a reduced annual membership fee if they offer 12 hours per year. Chester Chairs not receiving emails from new volunteer registration system at present and this will need to be investigated.
- We will also need to recruit or develop a team who can organise events such as the Cheeky Monkey Tea Party and Christmas Party.
- First aid classes can also be provided through a national NCT initiative and if a volunteer had the time to do this it could be investigated. This would provide both fundraising opportunities and a service to local parents.
- We are also currently receiving a lot of offers from suppliers asking us to arrange events as fundraisers where they sell their product or service and they provide a rebate or percentage back to NCT Chester but this would also need volunteer support to coordinate and perhaps there are easier

ways to fundraise for example an annual advertising subscription could be more advantageous to NCT Chester than a one of event that could take volunteer time to organise. However if anybody wanted to organise this type of event it could be taken forward.

Core Volunteer Roles

Nominated, seconded and agreed during the meeting:

Branch Co-Chair	Michelle Collins
Branch Co-Chair	Carrie Littlehales
Parent Support Coordinator	Lisa Brocklehurst
Membership secretary	Catherine Jones
Treasurer	Caroline Swan/Suzy Gospage
Breastfeeding Friendly Coordinator	Emma Savage
Branch Secretary	Laura Edwards
NatChat distributor	Rachel Jones & Liz Tweddle
Regular Events Coordinator	Emma Young until December

AOB

Thanks to all volunteers for making the branch such a fantastic success over the past year.