



Wellington Multiple Sclerosis Society 61st Annual General Meeting

Minutes of meeting

Date: 17 May 2025

Time: 10.30 am

Venue: Upper Hutt Cosmopolitan Club, 11 Logan Street, Ebdentown, Upper Hutt

Opening karakia and welcome.

Steve welcomed all present and opened the meeting with a karakia.

1. Attendees and Apologies:

Attendees

Sitting Committee members:

Steve McCloskey (President), Ross Judge (Chair and Treasurer), Alarna Sharratt, Paul Gruschow, Nicky Louis

Operations Team:

Philippa Scott (Lead Community Advisor), Maria Louisa Suarez (Community Advisor), Suzanne Linton (Communications and Fundraiser)

Privacy Officer

Murray Ruddell

Members:

Nick Brandon	Michelle Graham	Glen Sullivan
Valerie Cameron	Jenny Hargreaves	Ruth Tomlinson
Wayne Cameron	Warwick Hollebone	Lindsay Watson
Jocelyn Fagerstrom	Diane Jackson	Aimee Wilson
Lars Fagerstrom	Susan Palmer	Anne Woodside
Sarndra Flay	Katharina Robichon	Alkan Woodside

Non-members:

Bobby Saranglao

Cara Schlebusch and Elysha-Rose Grant (Guest presenters)

Apologies for absence

Professor Anne La Flamme (Patron)	Dr Georgia Lenihen-Giels	Alina Pescini
Laura Dempsey (past President)	Kari Lloyd	Hena Renjith
Dorothy Gaunt (former Field Worker 1983)	Alexis Mundy (former Committee member)	Jenny Simpson (former Committee member)
Maxine Harland	Devayani Odath	Glynis Valli
Kaye Keighly	Christine O'Sullivan	

2. One-minute silence for departed members

Members and guests observed a minute of silence for members who had passed away during the previous year.

3. Minutes of the 60th AGM and matters arising

No amendments or matters arising.

The minutes were approved as an accurate record of the meeting.

4. President's Report

Steve presented the President's Annual Report, noting that the 2024–25 year marked the 60th (Diamond Jubilee) anniversary of the Wellington Multiple Sclerosis Society, reflecting on the Society's strong foundations and enduring commitment to empowering people with MS and their whānau.

He acknowledged and thanked the Committee, volunteer expert advisors, and Operations Team for their time, expertise, and dedication to ensuring the Society's sustainability and effective service delivery to the MS community.

Key staff changes during the year were noted, including the appointment of Philippa Scott as Lead Community Advisor and the recruitment of Maria Louisa Suarez as Community Advisor, with appreciation expressed for the contributions of departing staff.

The vital role of Community Advisors in advocating for clients and supporting access to funded services was highlighted, as reinforced at the National Society's AGM. Thanks were also extended to the Society's Patron, Professor Anne La Flamme, and her research team for their ongoing support and engagement with the Society.

Steve reported on the Society's fundraising and awareness activities during the year and acknowledged the generosity of donors, including a significant bequest from the estate of Alan Kemp, which has strengthened the Society's financial position.

Looking ahead, Steve advised that the Society will undertake reregistration under the Incorporated Societies Act 2022, including reviewing and updating its constitution and holding a Special General Meeting before April 2026. Members

were encouraged to consider volunteering for Committee roles. The report concluded with a message celebrating the Society's past achievements while focusing on a positive and sustainable future.

The full text of the President's Annual Report is provided separately.

5. Treasurer's Report

Ross presented his report, printed copies of which were distributed to attendees. He informed members that the Society had received bequests totalling \$243,851 for the year ended 31 December 2024. We received payment of \$60,939 from Whaikaha - Ministry of Disabled People and other financial support from our major charitable grant funders: Pub Charity, Lottery Grants Board, COGS, Jack Jeffs, Eastern Community Trust, Nikau Foundation, Kapiti District and Upper Hutt Councils.

The full text of the Treasurer's Annual Report is provided separately.

6. Operations Report

Philippa, Maria Louisa and Suzie presented the Operations Report covering a year of significant staff transition. The Lead Community Advisor, Jo Dean, resigned in June 2024, and the Community Advisor, Lacey Reedy, left in January 2025 after nearly four years of service. Both were acknowledged for their contributions and wished well in their future roles.

Philippa was appointed Lead Advisor in November 2024, bringing a background in Occupational Therapy. Maria Luisa joined as Community Advisor in April 2025, with experience in alternative medicine and mobility and access support services. Suzie was acknowledged for providing continuity and support during the staffing transition.

Monthly support groups continued across the region, a new support group for people recently diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis was established, the team continued to provide advocacy with employers and Work and Income, and health sector relationships were sustained.

With two full-time Community Advisors now in place, the Society anticipates expanding service offerings in the coming year, despite wider sector funding constraints.

Plans for the next year include exploring the development of a carers' group, strengthening connections with other regional MS societies, updating promotional materials, and implementing a more formal client feedback system.

The report concluded with thanks to the Committee members for their ongoing governance, commitment, and support in ensuring high-quality services for people living with Multiple Sclerosis in the Wellington region.

The full text of the Operations Report is provided separately.

7. Andy Woodside Memorial Award

This memorial award is awarded annually to a member of the Society who has made a notable contribution to the Society's mission to enable people with MS to live their best lives.

The Committee had agreed that this year's award be presented to Nick Brandon for his services to the 'Face of MS' campaign.

The award was duly presented to Nick by Steve as President of the Society, with thanks for being an outstanding representative throughout the campaign.

8. Confirmation of Committee members and Accountants

Committee Members

All Committee Members had indicated their willingness to stand and were duly re-elected by all members present.

The Committee members are:

Steve McCloskey (President)

Ross Judge (Treasurer)

Alarna Sharratt

Paul Greschow

Nicky Louis

Privacy Officer

Murray Ruddell was re-confirmed as the Society's Privacy Officer.

Accountants

Brunton Cropp and Co Ltd were re-confirmed as the Society's accountants.

9. Update from our Patron's research team

Members of Professor Anne La Flamme's research team, Cara Schlebusch and Elysha-Rose Grant, spoke to members about the latest developments in MS research and took questions from the floor.

The Committee and members thanked our Patron and her team for their work for the MS Community and especially for their continuing support of Wellington MS Society.

10. The next AGM will be at 10:30am Saturday 16 May 2026 at the Upper Hutt Cosmopolitan Club.