

Concert to raise cash for research

A MUSICIAN who suffers from a rare genetic illness is holding a concert to raise money for the national association that promotes research into the condition. When Michael Dann was first diagnosed with CVID (common variable immune deficiency) 10 years ago he had to spend a whole day in hospital every three weeks having treatment to prevent him constantly picking up life-threatening infections. And before the next session the immunity he received had virtually gone. At that time only about 5,000 cases were recorded in the UK and little was known about how to treat the condition effectively. But life changed dramatically when he was given the chance in 1999 to take part in a drug trial at Papworth Hospital – becoming their first patient to be taught how to

immunise himself at home. He and his wife Kate underwent a 10-week training course to learn the technique, and Mr Dann, 43, now spends just two hours a week being infused intravenously with the blood product immunoglobulin, which is pumped into his body through small needles, attached to syringes, that are inserted under the skin. "If I hadn't had the treatment I probably wouldn't be here because my last bout of pneumonia was really bad. I was in hospital for a week, and the next time it would have been worse," he explained. "I still pick up bugs, and have to be careful not to come into contact with someone with something nasty, like chicken pox for example. But I am probably one of the healthiest in the Papworth clinic. You wouldn't think there was anything wrong with me." A music teacher and keyboard player, who is a leading light of local drama group Mere Players, Mr Dann hopes to raise the profile of CVID patients through the schools and organisations he works with.

He is also a member of the Primary Immunodeficiency Association (PiA), which organises the very successful Jeans for Genes fund raising campaign and will benefit from the concert. It takes place at Roydon Village Hall, at 3pm on Sunday, March 9, with proceeds for the PiA and South Norfolk Youth Symphonic Band. Tickets, priced £6 including refreshments, can be obtained by calling 01379 740041 or 01379 642572.



STRIKING A CHORD: Michael Dann hopes to raise both money and the profile of common variable immune deficiency sufferers. Picture: SUPPLIED