**Feb/March Newsletter 2021**

**Featured in this newsletter:**

• Details of new virtual clubs.

• Our first online Bingo event!

• Information about help available in West Sussex.

**CEO's Message**

Dear members, I hope you are all safe and well.

While this year didn't quite get off to the start many of us were hoping for and we have had to put our face-to-face services on hold once more, please rest assured we are still very much here to support you.

If you have any concerns about your eye health, need advice on daily living aids, assistance with technology or just need to speak to a friendly voice who understands – please call us on 01243 828555.

Thank you to everyone who attended our first ever online AGM on 16th December. I am delighted to say technology was on our side and there were no technical glitches, enabling Chair of Trustees, Norman Boyland to provide a run-through of the highlights and key achievements of the previous financial year – April 2019 - Mar 2020.

This newsletter features the latest update on our services, other forms of support available and first glance at some of the exciting things we have planned to celebrate our 100th Anniversary in October!

With my very best wishes, Nik Demetriades - Chief Executive

**P.S. Please do take the time to complete the Sensory Impairment Needs Assessment Survey to inform future service provision in the county. See page 6 for details.**

All information in this newsletter can be found on our website.

**Update your details**

Don’t forget to let us know if you have moved to a new house or changed your phone number recently, so that we can continue supporting you.

**Newsletter format**

Did you know we produce the newsletter in a variety of formats - large print, Braille, email, and audio on USB or CD. If you would like receive our newsletter in a different format, please contact Karen McLachlan on: 01243 828555.

**Our Support 4 You**

At the beginning of January, following the Government's announcement of a third national lockdown, we took the difficult decision to cease face-to-face support for the time being. Our team of staff and volunteers continue to be available by phone, so please do contact them if you need advice or support. And although we can’t meet you in person, we can arrange virtual face-to-face meetings via Zoom video and teleconferencing.

**Your eye health**

If you think your eye-sight has deteriorated or if you have concerns about your eye health please contact your local eye unit, GP, or optician. Not seeking help could result in further and potentially irreversible deterioration to sight.

**Help with accessing technology**

So many services have been forced to move online over the past year. If you would like advice and assistance with using and accessing functions on your computer, laptop or tablet then call AbilityNet’s free helpline on 0800 048 7642 or visit their website: [www.abilitynet.org.uk](http://www.abilitynet.org.uk)

For further support with queries and questions regarding accessible technology devices (smartphones, iPads and tablets, Alexa, Amazon Echo, laptops etc) please contact Tara Beesley on 07545 501 216 or email [tara.beesley@4sight.org.uk](mailto:tara.beesley@4sight.org.uk)

**Top Tip:** If you are using a screen for long periods of time, try applying the 20-20-20 rule - looking at something 20 feet away for 20 seconds, every 20 minutes you look at a screen.

**Virtual Clubs Timetable**

We have several new virtual groups planned over the next couple of months, so if you haven’t yet joined us then perhaps one of these might be for you. They may be accessed by phone as well as the internet, so if you have any questions about joining, please do call us on 01243 828555 for assistance.

“It is great to meet and talk to new people. We are able to chatter as if we were all together. I would recommend anyone to give it a try. Naomi is a whiz and will sort out any problems you may have. Come join us and give it a try!” - Shirley, Member & Volunteer

**February:**

**Topical Talk: Carer’s Support West Sussex**. Wednesday 17th at 11am-12pm

Do you support someone who cannot manage without your help? Pam Thomson from Carers Support West Sussex will join us to speak about services offered by the Carer Wellbeing Team to enable you to maintain and improve your own health and wellbeing.

**NEW - History Discussion Group.** Tuesday 23rd at 11am-12pm (last Tuesday of the month)

Join us to chat about a significant historic event or character, hosted by member, Shirley Buck.

**March:**

**Chatterbooks**. Monday 1st at 11am-12pm

Join us to chat about the latest books you have enjoyed, hosted by Sheilagh Baker.

**Virtual Quiz.** Thursday 4th at 11am-12pm (first Thursday of the month)

20 questions – self marking. Join us for some friendly competition.

**Virtual Tech Club.** Wednesday 10th at 2pm-3pm (second Wednesday of the month)

Is using technology a challenge? Do you have a particular query relating to using your phone, tablet or smart speaker? Speak with our tech expert – Tara Beesley.

**Topical Talk: Daily Living Aids.** Wednesday 17th at 11am-12pm

Outreach Worker, Tara Beesley, will talk through and demonstrate a range of aids which can help with carrying out daily tasks more easily and independently.

**History Discussion Group.** Tuesday 23rd at 11am-12pm

**Chatterbooks.** Monday 29th at 11am-12pm (date change due to Easter)

**April:**

**Virtual Quiz.** Thursday 1st at 11am-12pm

**Virtual Tech Club.** Wednesday 14th at 2pm-3pm

**How to Join:**

Virtual Clubs are accessed via the Zoom video and teleconferencing facility over the internet or by phone.

To access by phone:

Dial in on the following number at the meeting time and enter the Meeting ID when prompted, followed by # Telephone: 0203 481 5240 Meeting ID: 818 372 5311 (followed by #)

To access via the internet:

If you would like to access the meeting over the internet, please call 01243 828555 and we will email you the meeting link.

**News & Information**

**Sensory Impairment Needs Assessment Surveys**

The county council are carrying out these surveys to find out what residents with sight or hearing impairments think about the services they receive, and additionally, the impact of COVID-19 and access to services during this time. The surveys will close on Sunday 21st February and will be used to identify unmet needs to inform future service provision. To fill out the survey please find the relevant links on our website: <4sight.org.uk/sina-survey>

If you have any queries please call Healthwatch on 0300 012 0122.

**WSCC Community Hub**

If you need urgent support for food, medicine, utilities bills or heating, then the WSCC Community Hub phone line is manned every day (including bank holidays), 8am to 8pm, call 033 022 27980. Citizens Advice in West Sussex Now has a new free local Adviceline number, their new number is 0808 278 7969.

**Carers Support West Sussex**

Carers Support West Sussex is available to help all carers access services, grants, information and equipment (including free PPE during COVID-19), as well as providing a space to connect with other carers (currently online groups). For more information contact the team on: 0300 028 8888 or email [info@carerssupport.org.uk](mailto:info@carerssupport.org.uk)

**Sussex Mental Healthline**

If you are worried about your mental health, or that of a loved one, mental health support is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, on: 0800 0309 500.

**Unused / unwanted magnifiers**

Do you have any magnifiers you no longer use or want? If so, we would be very grateful if you would consider donating them to us to pass onto other members in need. If you would like to support us in this way, please phone us on 01243 828555.

**Mental Health Support**

RNIB and MIND are working together to offer free emergency mental health sessions over the phone by BACP-registered counsellors with sight loss experience. The hour-long sessions are designed to offer emotional support at this difficult time and are available until the end of June. To register visit the RNIB website or by call the RNIB helpline on 0303 123 9999.

**Census 2021 - 21st March**

This national survey takes place every 10 years, it gives a picture of the people and households across the country. You will receive a letter with an access code which will allow you to fill in the census form online. All letters will have a phone number you can use for assistance, or to request to receive a paper copy, large print or Braille version. By taking part, you'll be helping make sure you and your community get the services needed now and in the future.

**Be Scam Aware - COVID-19 vaccination scam alert.**

Healthwatch has reported fraudulent calls and text messages offering the COVID-19 vaccination. In some cases, people are asked to press a number on their keypad or send a text message to confirm they wish to receive the vaccine. Doing so is likely to result in a charge being applied to their phone bill. In other cases, callers are offering the vaccine for a fee or asking for bank details. If you receive a call you believe to be fraudulent, hang up.

The vaccine is only available from the NHS who will contact you directly to arrange an appointment.

If you believe you have been the victim of fraud or identity theft you should report this directly to Action Fraud on 0300 123 2040.

**Daily Living Aids**

Looking ahead to the next clock change in March, longer days and lighter evenings, you may find one of the following audio clocks/ watches useful. For more information, or to place an order, for these or other products available, please contact Beau on: 07907 021202

**Communiclock - £36**

Radio-controlled talking calendar clock with a large black button for time and date announced in a clear male voice with adjustable volume. It is battery operated or powered from mains using AC adaptor (available separately).

**Talking Atomic Watches - £35**

Announces time & date in a clear, male British voice and automatically adjusts between summer and winter time. It also has the option of an alarm and hourly time announcement. Available with leather strap or expanding bracelet.

**Large Print Scrabble - £35**

Board has larger 24mm squares, with 16 point font and enhanced colours, to make them clearer to read. The tiles sit snugly within the squares and the board has a built-in stand for easy rotation. Supplied with large print user guide.

**Dominoes - £11**

The indented dots on these dominoes make them easy to identify and the two halves are separated by a black line and tactile gold marker. 28 piece set presented in a wooden box. Domino measures 5cm by 2.5cm.

**Jumbo Print Playing Cards - £7.20**

Printed in extra-large print on standard sized card, with large images to help identify the suit.

**Area committees**

There are currently five Area Committees working alongside us to support members across the County. Under normal circumstances they would be running active social groups and clubs for members, holding fundraising events and championing the needs of people with sight loss with their local councils. However, since the pandemic began, all activities have since had to cease.

The Committees and their club leaders have been trying to keep regular contact with members, but they know this doesn’t make up for the loss of getting out, exercising, and having that personal interaction with one another. The Area Committees very much look forward to seeing members face to face again soon, once the programme of vaccinations has been completed and the community better protected, building strong and active communities within the 4Sight Vision Support family once more. Some of our newer Committees also have some exciting future plans for clubs, activities and possibly even outings.

The Chairs of the Committees would like to take this opportunity to thank their Committee members and Club Leaders who have strived to maintain contact and support where needed during this continued challenging time. They would also welcome members to get in touch if you have any suggestions for activities that you would like to see happen in the future.

**Mid Sussex:** Chair - Richard Whiteside

**Arun and Chichester:** Chair - Maureen Jenkins

**Horsham:** Chair – Julia Kirkham

**Adur:** Chair - Nick Le Mare

**Midhurst:** Chair – David Shaw

To get in touch with your local area committee please call Naomi on 07719 531035.

**Fundraising News**

**Festive Fun 4Sight – Creative Christmas Competition**

We were delighted to receive so many wonderful and incredibly creative entries to our children’s design competition. Our panel of judges were blown away with the bright, tactile and sensory Christmas trees from eveyone.

Age 4 and under: Amy, age 4

Age 5-7: Ivy, age 7

Age 8 – 11: Mera, age 9

**We are turning 100!**

This year is a momentous occasion in our charity's history. Here are just a couple of the activities we have planned to celebrate, watch this space for lots more to come.

**Wellbeing Walk - Saturday 26th June**

The popular annual walk at Angmering Park Estate is back. Packed with mindfulness moments this will be a special fundraiser that will boost your physical & mental wellbeing too. To pre-register for more information call the team on 01243 828555 or email fundraising@4sight.org.uk

**Virtual Retro Bingo - Thursday 11th March 7 - 8:30pm**

Hosted by Dawns Vintage Do, this fun-filled night of entertainment includes: 2 rounds of bingo with prizes for a line and a full house, mini quiz, games and singing from the fabulous Dawn herself. This event will be hosted on zoom (camera facility needed) and bingo cards will be sent via email (or we can print & send these out to you).

Let your friends and family know!

£5 per person.

For more information, or to book please visit our website 4sight.org.uk or call 07719 531037

**For further information about the Newsletter or the support we can offer, please contact us on 01243 828 555.**