

FEBRUARY 2016 NEWSLETTER

Charity No. 1075447
Company No. 3740647



Supporting blind and partially sighted people



TEA DANCES 2016

VENUE:

WOODLANDS CENTRE,
WOODLANDS AVENUE,
RUSTINGTON, BN16 3HB

TIME: 2pm till 4.30pm
Tickets are £5 on the door

Price includes a cream tea!

Free parking

For more information
please call 4SIGHT on

01243 828 555

www.4sight.org.uk
IN AID OF 4SIGHT

Sunday 21st February

Sunday 20th March

Sunday 17th April

Sunday 22nd May

Sunday 26th June

Sunday 25th September

Sunday 16th October

Sunday 20th November

Contents

- 1 Tea Dances
- 2 Burgess Hill Drop-in
- 2/3 Shoreham Update
- 4/5 Midhurst Update
- 6/7 Bognor Shop Update
- 7 200 Club
- 8/9 Anna Storkey's Story
- 10 Second-hand CCTVs
- 10 Volunteer Elaine
- 11 Bus Stop Audio Fob
- 12 Tactile Paving
- 12 Sound Tennis
- 13 CEO's Message
- 14 Diary Dates
- 15 Contact Details
- 16 Photo Diary

Burgess Hill Drop-in

Don't forget that one of the 4SIGHT Outreach Team are available on the third Monday of each month, from 10am to 1pm, at the Burgess Hill Help Point, which is at 96 Church Walk, Burgess Hill, RH15 9AS.

The 4SIGHT Outreach Workers can assist with advice relating to sight loss and demonstrate Low Vision Aids, as well as carry out Low Vision Assessments (booked in advance).

If you would like to book an appointment for a Low Vision Assessment at the Burgess Hill Drop-in, then please contact Kirstie on **01273 454 343**.

Shoreham 4SIGHT Centre Update

Happy New Year to you all, from all of us at the Shoreham 4SIGHT Centre. As some of you will already know, we have now moved!

Our new address is:-

1st Floor, The Shoreham Centre,
2 Pond Road,
Shoreham-by-Sea,
BN43 5WU.
Tel. **01273 454 343**.

We have a list available of the many local groups that meet in and around the Adur Area. The following groups are currently looking for new members to come and join them:

Lancing Self-Help Group

They meet at Sea View Court, Brighton Road, Lancing, each week on Thursday, from 10am to 2pm, but not during August. They are a social activities group, that have lunch, a quiz and much more.

Tai Chi Group

They meet at the Shoreham 4SIGHT Centre, 1st Floor, 2 Pond Road, Shoreham-by-Sea, weekly every Friday, from 10.15am to 11.15am. They are a health and well-being group. You can see a photo of some of the members on the back page of this newsletter.

If you are interested in joining one of these groups, then please contact the Shoreham 4SIGHT Centre on **01273 454 343**.

Bognor Regis Area - Tai Chi Group

Jan Simpson is a qualified Tai Chi teacher who has been teaching in Sussex for the last 17 years and has taught people from all walks of life. Over the last 5 years he has been teaching a weekly class for the Worthing Society for the Blind, and during this time he has seen some incredible health and wellbeing transformations.

The classes have proved so popular that he is looking to offer Tai Chi classes to 4SIGHT members in the Bognor Regis area. If you are interested, please get in touch with Jan on **01243 828 555**.

Update from Midhurst 4SIGHT Centre

Well, here we are in February already and Christmas now seems an age away! It's a refreshing time of the year as we look forward to the things we have planned here in Midhurst in the coming months. But first, a mention of some activities towards the end of last year. The Midhurst Focus Group held their Christmas meeting in the Centre, with a wonderful spread of nibbles, drinks, music, fun and laughter. You can see a photo on the back of this newsletter.

The Focus Group has been running in Midhurst for many years now and is one of our oldest groups; by the length of time it has been going, not by the age of the members! They are always happy to welcome new members and have an exciting itinerary for the year ahead. Their monthly meetings run from March to November each year. Get in touch with me if you are interested in joining them.

Technology Support Club

Some of you got in touch to say you were interested in joining a Technology group here in Midhurst, so our first session was on Thursday 28th January. It is a small group of 6 people, led at the moment by Dan. The group gets together once a month, and the subjects and activities are tailored to what the group want. This can be a combination of using different applications, screen commands and gestures, or making your equipment more accessible in relation to your sight loss. After the first couple of sessions the plan is for Anna and me to continue leading the group. We are willing to set up another group if more people would like to join so let us know.

Coffee Morning for Visually Impaired Veterans

Did you do National Service or serve in the Armed Forces? If so, then why not come along to a Coffee Morning on **Thursday 25th February at 11am**. You may be surprised to know, that there are a number of our 4SIGHT members who are veterans living in the Chichester district, especially the Midhurst/Petworth area. You may not know one another but one thing you all have in common is that you have served our country at some time and you are living with sight loss; some may already be members of Blind Veterans UK.

At the coffee morning Hilary Brown, the Blind Veterans UK Area Welfare Officer, will be on hand to answer any questions you may have about the help available; ranging from emotional support, developing skills, confidence building, independent living, as well as recreation and short break activities at their centre in Brighton. So, if you are a visually impaired veteran please do come along.

Living Paintings.

Have you heard of Living Paintings? If not, let me explain. It's an initiative from a charity supporting visually impaired people through Touch to See books, which have raised pictures that come to life when your fingers feel them. The books include audio soundtracks, that describe what is being touched, felt and 'seen', and are often narrated by well-known voices. There is a comprehensive book list to borrow from including British wildlife, English gardens, history of art, paintings from the National Gallery, British architecture, etc.

If this is something that appeals to you then we can try to set up a Touch to See Book Club here in Midhurst. Living Paintings has the facility to loan as many books as needed, so each group member has one. The group may decide to discuss audio books as well, on alternate weeks. Please get in touch if this is of interest to you.

Macular Group

Each year, around 70,000 people in the UK are diagnosed with Age-Related Macular Degeneration (AMD), and currently around 12% of people in the UK aged over 80 are affected by late-stage AMD. In the UK there are around 300 Macular Society (MS) groups run by dedicated volunteers, most of who have MD themselves or know someone who has MD. Groups offer support/help in understanding MD and coming to terms with sight loss. They share information about obtaining treatment, other services and staying independent.

There are a lot of AMD groups in West Sussex; the nearest ones to Midhurst are in Chichester and Haslemere. A very successful Adur group meets at our Shoreham 4SIGHT Centre each month. Would you be interested in having a more local group in this area? If so, the MS Regional Manager would be willing to help start up a group here. Just get in touch with me if this is of interest to you.

Until next time, wishing you all a Happy & Peaceful New Year.

Bev Tinson, Development & Outreach Officer. **Tel. 01730 812 338**

Bognor Charity Shop Update

A warm and loving welcome to you all – sending you this as it will soon be Valentine’s Day and we wanted to spread our love to you all, from us here at the Bognor Charity Shop.

2016 is well and truly here and already we have lost some amazing English legends. Here at Bognor Charity Shop we are lucky to have some wonderful legends of our own, and we are going to have a year of celebration and appreciation of all our staff and volunteers!

This year we will be seeing lots of BIG birthday celebrations! In fact we have a 50th, 60th, 70th and 80th, and our fabulous June will be the ripe young age of 90!!! Believe me when I say she doesn’t look or act it – a true inspiration. She has been a volunteer for a number of years, even though she herself is visually impaired. Wednesday afternoon is the day to come and visit her at the Bognor Shop – she worked with our Beau, who now works at Bradbury Centre, and they were a great team. June has more stamina than most of us, and is one of the first to put her name down for our volunteer meal nights out and a few glasses of wine – good girl.

With all that said, the team and I would love it if you joined in with our celebrations over the year – so watch out for fun and offers throughout the next 10 months. You can join in, by visiting the shop when you are next in town, donating goods or taking part in the 4SIGHT 200 Club.

Going back to the last Newsletter, I mentioned that “our David” would be with us at our Christmas meal – he was - David is our Gnome! Every year we all bring a present and pull a ticket to get a gift and David the Gnome is one of them. The person that wins him keeps him for a year then returns him with something different about him, ready for the next person. Christmas 2014, Joan who works on a Friday morning took him home – he returned in full

Father Christmas outfit including a sack of gifts for the winner – well done Joan you did a wonderful job. This year's winner was a very surprised Beau! So when you visit the Bradbury centre, don't forget to ask Beau what David is up to!!

Back to 2016, where we have been in the York Road shop now for just over a year – can't believe it! We have decided it's time to have a little change round in store, so the shop may be closed as and when necessary for work to be done for health & safety reasons.

Talking of decorating and a new look, we are asking for some help – do you know anyone or a company that would give some time to get the exterior of the building looking better? Or a window cleaner that would help by cleaning the windows every now and again! Or maybe a friend or family member, that would like to volunteer in the Bognor or Midhurst shop for a few hours each week? Even a man with a van who could volunteer to pick up furniture bits, a couple of hours a week! Just let me know – that would be fantastic.

In the meantime keep warm, safe and healthy – spring is just round the corner! Take care & keep in touch.

Sarah, Charity Shop Manager. Tel. 01243 861 776.

200 Club

The winning number for **December was 197** and for **January was 80**. Why not join the 200 Club and raise money for 4SIGHT?

By paying just £20 for the year you will be given a unique number, from 1 to 200. This is entered into our monthly prize draw, where you have the chance to win £100 each month.

There are lots of numbers still available. If you would like to join, then please call us on **01243 828 555**.

'My Story' as told by one of our 4SIGHT members Blind Within My Blindness!

I was struck with NAION (Non-arteritic Anterior Ischaemic Optic Neuropathy), which is a sort of stroke of the optic nerve, in April last year. Got a migraine, thought nothing of it, but after two weeks of sight problems, I was eventually diagnosed with NAION.

Absolutely devastated, unable to drive and seeing ghosts (really, 'Bonnet' syndrome) I visited all the hospitals on the south coast, having been driven mad by steroids, scary tests and procedures. The only funny side of it was all the consultants gazing into my eyes with interest; medical, of course! I was discharged in August 2014, given lots of leaflets, which I couldn't read, and left to cope. Also told, 'you might or might not go completely blind'.

Having moved to Midhurst in 2013 and being far too preoccupied with the move and my job, I did not make any friends. My isolation was complete. No driving, no job and no one to talk to. I realised that blindness makes you very vulnerable and lonely as sighted friends seemed too polite or lacking knowledge to talk about it. After all, before my loss of sight, I thought that blindness makes you see all black, of which I became increasingly terrified.

My hospital consultant, when discharging me, recommended that 4SIGHT might be of help. I contacted them in the Bradbury Centre and was shown all the aids I could use to improve my life. Not with leaflets but by a caring, knowledgeable person. They even lent me a video reader/magnifier to enable me to read the pesky leaflets.

RNIB showered me with more reading bumf and lots of practical advice about my first steps into disability. They gave me emotional support, but it was on the phone with a sighted counsellor and not quite the thing, because how can you counsel someone crying into the phone??? What I really needed was an experienced support

person and more importantly, for them to be local. Nevertheless, I was very grateful for their help.

The local council provided me with the help of 2 ROVIs who were empathetic, helpful with everyday aids but limited to three visits as their small team were supporting circa 30,000 cases in Sussex. Then, nothing but frustration, alienation and powerlessness. Couldn't read, couldn't drive, couldn't work, neither could I use the mobile or computer effectively. This summer I had a nervous breakdown, not being able to cope with myself and my blindness.

All in all, the whole support seems random and peripatetic. It is not what you need when your life changes into a disaster.

Now for the happy part.....

4SIGHT came to Midhurst where I live. For me it was a new lease of life, meeting so many other members and blind people, volunteering in the shop, being encouraged to talk to other 4SIGHT members about their condition, how they cope and even trying to give advice about technology to enable them to communicate more easily. I felt useful and among friends, which I craved so much.

Although I received an amount of practical help from state run organisations immediately after my disability started, it was 4SIGHT coming to Midhurst that gave me the professional, personal and caring help that I needed.

To conclude this story, it seems to me that the crux of the matter of support is that since we have come into an age of chronic underfunding of the NHS, the government expects us to rely more and more on charities. However, as in other areas, the funding for charities is short-lived. What will happen to people like me then?

Anna Storkey

Second-hand Desktop Video Magnifiers

Just a reminder to our members that we have a selection of second-hand desktop video magnifiers on offer at our Bognor Regis Centre available for purchase.

These can either be purchased outright or bought through a loan agreement so that they can be taken on a temporary basis for testing before purchase.

Please note that they have all been tested and are in working order, but will be sold as seen and are non-refundable.

If you have any questions regarding the machines available or would like to visit the centre to view the machines then please contact either Dan Batchelor or me on **01243 838 002**.

Beau Prince, Assistant Outreach Worker

Charity Shop Volunteer - Elaine

Hello everyone! My name is Elaine and I have been with 4SIGHT for three years. I have loved every minute of my time with this wonderful charity.

I have gained so much confidence since being there. I love all the things that I do, including tombolas, raffles, using the till, helping customers and most of all I love to make people happy.

What also makes it special are the staff, who are amazing, kind and lovely; I am so happy there. Well, enough from me! I wish you all the best.

Elaine, Bognor Charity Shop Volunteer



Bus Stop Audio Information Fob

Over 280 buses operating in West Sussex are equipped with the latest technology that tracks their exact position and monitors their movements along bus routes. Electronic displays installed at bus stops inform waiting passengers of the predicted arrival time of their next bus.

Real time information display screens are currently available at over 160 bus stops across the county including Worthing, Shoreham, Horsham, Crawley, East Grinstead and Haywards Heath.

The majority of bus stop displays also provide the information in audio format. A small electronic key fob activates speakers within the display, which verbally announces to waiting passengers the information on the display.

This technology is helping to make life easier for bus passengers with visual impairments, or learning or reading difficulties.

To activate the audio facility, simply press the unique key fob device about one metre from the bus stop display screen, to hear the following announcement:

- The current time.
- The name of the bus stop.
- The service number, destination and arrival times of any buses due within the next 30 minutes.

The key fobs are available from West Sussex County Council and are free of charge.

For further information, or to request a key fob, please contact Liz Robbins on **01243 382 183**. Or email buses@westsussex.gov.uk

Tactile Paving Training Workshops

If you are visually impaired, or you work with people that have sight loss, then these 2–3 hour workshops are for you.

Joel from Guide Dogs will be holding several tactile paving training sessions. These will give you an opportunity to learn about the different types of tactile paving found in the built environment, to help you get out and about more independently and understand what the different types of tactile paving mean.

These sessions will also equip you with the knowledge to be able to contribute effectively to local authority consultations on changes to the built environment. Dates and 4SIGHT venues are as follows:

Tuesday 12th April - Bognor Regis, 10.30am or 2pm

Wednesday 13th April - Shoreham-by-Sea, 10.30am or 2pm

Thursday 14th April - Midhurst, 10.30am or 2pm

Spaces are limited to a maximum of 8 per session, so to book your place please call us on one of the phone numbers below.

Bognor 4SIGHT Centre 01243 828 555

Shoreham 4SIGHT Centre 01273 454 343

Midhurst 4SIGHT Centre 01730 812 338

Sound Tennis

Sound Tennis is a new and exciting sport that's become increasingly popular for blind and partially sighted people. It is similar to tennis but uses a spongy ball that can be heard when it bounces. It was launched in Brighton and Hove in February 2014 by ESAB and they are keen to offer the opportunity to people across the county.

For more details go to www.soundtennisussex.org.uk or phone Paul on 01273 697 339.

CEO's Message

As you'll no doubt have already noticed, this Newsletter is jam-packed with news & information, and I hope this makes you feel that 2016 is going to be another exciting year at 4SIGHT! For my part as CEO, there's a lot to report on, particularly about our funding, our partnership with the County Council and with other charities etc, and our plans to develop and grow 4SIGHT over the next few years. But, I'd like to save that for next time and instead - in this our 95th year of supporting & empowering blind and partially sighted people in West Sussex – I'll share with you these photos that demonstrate the passion, commitment and good humour that our staff, volunteers and members bring to 4SIGHT throughout the year. I hope you enjoy them and find them as inspiring as I do!

Nik Demetriades, Chief Executive



Left: 4SIGHT
Ramblers

Right: Shoreham
4SIGHT Centre Team
Below left: Donation
from Order of Lady
Freemasons
Below right: 4SIGHT
Kitchen Klub



Diary Dates

Sat 13th February, 10am - 12noon, Coffee Morning at Methodist Church Hall, Brunswick Road, Shoreham-by-Sea, BN43 5WB.

Sun 21st February and Sun 20th March, 2 - 4.30pm, Tea Dances at the Woodlands Centre in Rustington, BN16 3HB. For tickets or more details, please call 4SIGHT on **01243 828 555**.

Tues 23rd February, from 10am - 1pm, Supplier Information and Equipment Focus Day. Dolphin, Enhanced Vision and Calibre will be at 4SIGHT Bradbury Centre, Bognor Regis.

Thurs 25th February, from 11am, Coffee Morning for Visually Impaired Veterans at Midhurst 4SIGHT Centre.

Supplier Information and Equipment Focus Day. Optelec will be available from 10am - 1pm, on the following dates and venues:-

Tues 8th March at 4SIGHT Bradbury Centre, Bognor Regis

Wed 9th March at Shoreham 4SIGHT Centre

Thurs 10th March at Midhurst 4SIGHT Centre

Tues 22nd March, from 10am - 1pm, Supplier Information and Equipment Focus Day. Enhanced Vision and Dolphin will be at Midhurst 4SIGHT Centre.

This newsletter is available in large print, email, CD, Braille or USB. If you wish to change to a different format, then please let us know.

The copy date for the next edition is **29th February 2016** for any inclusions. Please let us know what you would like included.

Due to space and resources, some articles may have been edited accordingly. Information contained in this newsletter was correct to the best of our knowledge at the time of printing.

4SIGHT Contact Details

BOGNOR REGIS 4SIGHT CENTRE & CHARITY HQ

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36 Victoria Drive, Bognor Regis,
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Email: **enquiries@4sight.org.uk**

SHOREHAM 4SIGHT CENTRE

The Shoreham Centre, 2 Pond Road,
Shoreham-by-Sea,
West Sussex, BN43 5WU
Main Tel: **01273 454 343**
Email: **shoreham@4sight.org.uk**

MIDHURST 4SIGHT CENTRE

North Street, Midhurst
West Sussex, GU29 9DW
Main Tel: **01730 812 338**
Email: **midhurst@4sight.org.uk**

SIGHT CARE ADVISOR SERVICE

4SIGHT - Worthing Hospital Eye Clinic
Direct Number: **01903 285 281**
4SIGHT - St Richard's Hospital Eye Clinic
Tel: **01243 788 122 ext. 3515**

4SIGHT BOGNOR REGIS SHOP

11 York Road, Bognor Regis,
West Sussex, PO21 1LW
Tel: **01243 861 776**

4SIGHT PHOTO DIARY

Some members of the Tai Chi Group, which meets weekly at the Shoreham 4SIGHT Centre.



Two members of the Midhurst Focus Group enjoying their Christmas meal celebrations.



Bognor Charity Shop volunteer Christmas meal celebrations.



Members of Middleton Club having Christmas lunch at the Beresford.

Flautist, Chris Brown, at Shoreham supporters Christmas carol service.

