

East Sussex Association of Blind and Partially Sighted People

Summer 2016

Newsletter

The Friends of ESAB are holding a Racenight at Westham Village Hall on Saturday 19th November

Tickets (to include supper) £10

Letter from the Chief Executive

My job is full of surprises, it can range from the personal and serious (a member might say to me, my sight went overnight, I need you) to the surprising and joyous. For example, we recently received an Unsung Hero award from the Chairman of Lewes District Council, what an honour and so lovely to have been nominated (I still don't know who did nominate us). But it's not just me, no way, it's my team, pictured above. All of them have a dedication that in my 22 years leading teams I have never seen the like of. These guys are amazing. Couple them to the hundreds of volunteers working for ESAB and it makes my working life a pleasure.

This bulletin is full of good stuff, the Friends have been busy, the social groups are going from strength to strength, Art has featured in ESAB's work and we are

teaming up with the RNIB to put together a new training programme for members who want to get closer to work.

Our AGM is going to be on Tuesday 25th October from 2.30pm to 4.15pm. We are holding it at Diplocks Hall, The Diplocks Hailsham (same place as last year).

Everyone is welcome.

Enclosed with this Newsletter are some raffle tickets for the ESAB annual grand Raffle, this raises over £3000 for us so I would ask you please to sell as many as you can. There's a cash first prize of £250 so it's well worth a go and the money it raises goes towards helping our members live an independent and fulfilling life.

Over the coming months we are planning to hold some Mini Conferences around the county as we want to hear from you about the services we offer, what's good, what's not so good and what's missing. I will keep you posted.

Do you follow us on Twitter?

@eastsussexblind or @CEOESAB

Please like us on Facebook

Facebook.com/eastsussexblind

Friends of ESAB

Since the last Newsletter in the Spring the Friends have been pretty busy.

On April 9th we had an extremely popular “Pop up” French Café at the St Augustine’s Church Hall in Bexhill. With lovely French food prepared by Daniel, Joyce Wood and volunteers. Peter Dryden arranged marvellous French decorations and it was a resounding success with lots of requests to be done again so watch this space!

Our Annual Black Tie Dinner was a great success and we raised £4,589.

There were some lovely items for the Auction, namely two Tickets to Glyndebourne with a Hamper, a Flying lesson, a Rally Experience and many more.

On the 25th June we had the Open Garden at Summertree Farm in Bodle Street Green. This is a beautiful garden but unfortunately the weather was not very kind and therefore fewer people came than we had hoped for but at the end of the day our wonderful host, Mike Roberts, gave us a donation of £1,000 and we ended up the day with a lovely profit of £2,192 and, of course we would all like to thank Mike for his generosity and I also want to thank all the wonderful helpers who came along and worked so hard to make the day a success.

With regard to our future events, on Wednesday, 17th August Joyce Wood is having a Cream Tea at her home in Bexhill and our Race Night is going to be at Westham Village Hall on Saturday, 19th November. We look

forward to seeing as many of you as possible on both occasions. For further information on any of the above please contact me Shirley Price on 01323 833942.

Volunteering

A HUGE thank you to all our volunteers, your work makes such a difference

To all our volunteers, whether in the office, on the road, at the social groups, or home visiting, who continue to do sterling work through the county in support of our members, we say a huge THANK YOU. Without you we would not be able to help blind and partially sighted people combat isolation and loneliness.

As part of our recruitment process, we offer all new volunteers, in whatever capacity, Vision Awareness Training at either our Hailsham head office or at our Brighton & Hove office by Hove Station.

One recent attendee said “I thought that your vision awareness training was excellent, and so easy to get to grips with. I felt so much more confident in my ability to support clients by the end of the course. It was fun too. Thank you”.

Currently we have home visiting volunteer opportunities in Brighton, Polegate, Hailsham, Seaford, Alfriston, Crowborough, Pevensey, and Rye.

So anyone interested in volunteering, please do get in touch either via the website, by phone, by e-mail, or simply pop into the office any day Monday to Thursday between 9.00am and 4.00pm.

As we know, volunteers don't grow on trees, but they do sometimes retire, so we would like to say a special thank you and extend our best wishes to Gwelda Swindells, who has decided to move on after giving many years valuable service in her role as secretary and transport organiser for the Uckfield social group. We wish her well for the future. If you get bored Gwelda, you know where we are!

Welcome Dorothee Rahn

A special welcome goes out in this newsletter to Dorothee Rahn, who has joined us at head office for 3 months in a voluntary placement from her university in Germany where she is studying for a masters in health and social journalism, and is basing her dissertation on ESAB's work in the charity sector.

If you, or anyone you know, has a few hours to spare that you could give to us please contact Ian at Head Office on 01323 832252

Training

Getting your confidence for work

Are you blind or partially sighted? Would you like to work but lack confidence?

Part of the Big Skills project, this two-day workshop will provide guidance through individual and group support to help you build your confidence and skills for work.

Helping you plan for employment

Living with sight loss can be challenging. But we believe everyone affected by sight loss should be able to face the future with confidence. Losing your sight doesn't mean losing the opportunity to work.

Our two-day workshop delivered by independent living specialists provides advice and practical solutions to build confidence and deal with employment issues.

The workshop covers: Practical solutions for the workplace, tips on using technology, support and guidance on getting into work, welfare benefits, advice on the emotional aspects of sight loss, looking after your eyes and making the most of your vision and building your network

Full course information is available from Claire or Fiona at Head Office 01323 832252

Events

Art Insight, part of the Brighton Fringe Festival was a great success for ESAB

ESAB was very pleased to put together Art Insight, an Exhibition of pictures by blind and partially sighted artists showing life from their perspective. The exhibition was held in St Anns Well Gardens in Hove and was part of the Brighton Fringe Festival. Over the three weeks hundreds of visitors to the Gardens were given a better understanding of the problems faced by our members. Highlights of the exhibition included Gerty and Bertie who spent the days sunning themselves in the Sensory Garden and were made by the Brighton VIP's. Socialeyes made a tactile version of the ESAB Birthday card and Tina Wray exhibited two wonderful canvases showing the same scene from a sighted perspective and from her own perspective.

ESAB Services

Low Vision Support Worker

Full time worker providing at home support and visiting 695 members per year

Mobility and orientation training. Confidence building and practical help. 150 members per year.

Certificates of visual impairment, we handle 250 of these a year.

Aids and Equipment service. 1400 interactions per year.

Skills and strategies for daily living courses, 295 members trained per year

IT skills courses, smart phones and tablets.

In Brighton

Full time Co-ordinator

Aids and Equipment Centre in

Volunteer visiting scheme with 50 volunteers

Six social groups

Central services from ESAB

16 Social Groups.

Volunteer Co-ordinator

Outreach Vehicle (OV)

ESAB telephone helpline

RNIB Big Skills training

Volunteer visiting scheme

Advocacy help for members

Lobbying local and central government

Working with local planners

Three times a year membership Newsletter

Drop in (by appointment) for Aids and Equipment

Library service

Friends of ESAB

Annual well-being call to all members

ESAB Theatre Group

Bowls club

City Synergy and Sound Tennis Sussex

Information

Keep safe when driving

Can you read a number plate from 20.5 metres? Or has your Optometrist ever told you that there are concerns about your driving?

Of course, driving can be the most satisfying thing on earth, because it gives you lots of freedom and independence. But you have to think about the impact you have behind the wheel on other people out and about on the road.

Regular eye tests should be top of your list, especially if you already know about cases of sight loss in your family.

Sight loss is not just something that happens to older people. Family history or eye sight problems from birth can affect the ability to drive.

Having only monocular vision, because of a glass eye for example, is not a reason not to drive. As long as you can still see what is written on the number plate of the car in front of you, and your peripheral vision is not affected by only having one functional eye. Amanda, Optometrist at the Focus Medical Eye Centre in Hailsham, sees other conditions as far more worrying when it comes down to driving:

“If you are diagnosed with something like Glaucoma, that is where your pressures are high and you start to lose peripheral vision, which is the opposite of Macular Degeneration, where you lose the central vision. If you have either of those, you have to let the DVLA know, that you have that condition.”

The impact diseases like that can have on your eye sight means you should start thinking about your driving habits. Every tour you take driving your car doesn't just put your life at an enormous risk. You also risk the safety of all the other road users, in cars, on bikes or on foot. And the results of someone not being able to see properly can be fatal. For more information, please see our website for our free downloadable podcast, or ask your Optometrist for advice.

Written by Dorothee Rahn.

Social Groups

ESAB social groups go from strength to strength

As we enjoy the warmer months, our social groups around the county have been busy with lunches, summertime teas, events, outings, trips to the Theatre, and even a hog roast, and our chairman Roger Thomas has also been doing the rounds entertaining groups from Seaford to Lewes, and from Brighton to Polegate

with stories from his upbringing and his working life as a broadcaster.

In Brighton our severely hearing and sight impaired social group have been on a visit to the Painting Pottery Café in Brighton where they learnt to throw their own pot, including moulding, designing and then onto the wheel ready for baking. Then they went back and painted them before displaying them at the Art Exhibition in St. Anne's Wells Gardens. An insider revealed they had a great time and it was like being back at school. Meanwhile the Brighton VIPs have been playing crazy golf and enjoying fish and chips on the seafront by the pier.

Farewell to St. Richards - SocialEyes are moving to a new home. From September the Friday afternoon group will meet at Evelyn Glennie Court, Somerset Street, Kemptown, Brighton, taking with them many happy memories, apart from the time when everyone accidentally got locked in though!

Still in Brighton - fame at last for Thomas 'Tuck' Harrison who not only got his picture in the Argus but he made the South East evening news as well. The home where Thomas lives have come up with a new initiative to help combat isolation and loneliness and boost the health and wellbeing of residents – a brood of hens! – for their therapeutic and calming powers. Uckfield celebrate their 40th birthday in October, and have planned a special

afternoon tea party to mark the event. Also in attendance will be the town's mayor Louise Eastwood, and the town photographer, so we look forward to seeing the pictures in the next newsletter. Still in Uckfield, Doris Luke celebrated her 90th Birthday at Heaven's Farm with a customary sing-song, a cream tea, sandwiches, and not just 1 but 2 birthday cakes!

Anyone for Tennis?

No not Wimbledon, Sound Tennis Sussex, founded in 2014, have been busy not just winning the regional disability programme award from the LTA, but bringing the ESAB Cup back to Sussex after a great victory against Metro Blind Sport from London.

Invented in Japan, and brought to this country in 2007, it uses a spongy ball that can be heard when it bounces allowing the ball to be located. So very low vision players are allowed 3 bounces, and partially sighted players 2 bounces.

Currently there are weekly sessions in Brighton, Hove, and Eastbourne, so if you want to give it a go please call Paul Gillett on 01273 697339.

Outreach Vehicle

Our Outreach Vehicle is enjoying another successful year going out into the local communities of East Sussex

to raise awareness of sight loss and the support available for it. As of mid-July ESAB has met over 200 people through the Outreach Vehicle and that's not including meeting many of our current members too! Our visits to local community groups such as Newhaven's Elderberries and Rotherfield St Martin, in addition to coffee mornings in East Dean and Herstmonceux, are among our most popular outings so do let us know if there's a group or community centre near you who'd like a visit!

Let us know if there's somewhere you think the OV should be going!

Just call the office and ask for Danielle 01323 832252

ESAB People

Our wonderful volunteer Keith Dickman is trekking TWO marathons in Morocco to raise funds for ESAB!

Keith - who drives for the social group the Tuesday Club, our training courses and the Outreach Vehicle! - will be trekking across the desert of Morocco as part of The Saharan Challenge! Keith will be in Morocco from 20th to the 24th October and is trying to raise as much money as possible to support ESAB's work.

You can support Keith through the collection pot in our office.

Hello everyone,

My name is Dorothee and I have just flown in from Germany to support the nice people of ESAB at their office in Hailsham. I am a first year Masters student for Health- and Social Journalism at University in Magdeburg, in Germany.

I have always been a massive fan of talking and communication. No surprise, considering I have started doing that when I was a tiny child, aged ten months.

So, over the next few months you can expect lots of new and exciting features on ESABs online platforms and in their appearance.

Hopefully you will enjoy all the stuff ESAB offers you as much as I enjoy working with them.

If you see me out and about, please come and talk to me. I have always liked meeting new people.

Social Group Diary

As a member of ESAB you are welcome to attend your local social group. They provide talks, afternoon teas, trips out and a host of enjoyable social activities. Here are their meeting times:

- Battle and Burwash 2nd Friday of the month
- Bexhill 1st Friday

- Crowborough 3rd Friday
- Herstmonceux 3rd Wednesday
- VitalEYES (Brighton and Hove) 1st Friday
- Lewes 2nd Monday
- Newhaven (on hold at present)
- Polegate 4th Tuesday
- SocialEYES (Brighton and Hove) 3rd Friday
- Rye & Winchelsea 1st Tuesday
- Seaford 1st Thursday
- Saltdean & Peacehaven 4th Monday
- Tuesday Club 2nd Tuesday (In the evening)
- Uckfield 1st Wednesday
- Brighton VIP's 4th Thursday

Don't forget the Theatre Group either, this visits Saturday Matinees at Devonshire Park Theatre in Eastbourne with Audio Description.

ESAB bowls group meets on a regular basis, please contact HQ for further details.

For further information on any of the social groups please contact HQ.

East Sussex Association of Blind and Partially Sighted People

Prospects House, 7-9 George Street, Hailsham, BN27 1AD

Telephone 01323 832252 - Fax 01323 833054

Email: info@eastsussexblind.org

Website: www.eastsussexblind.org

Charity Registration number 209535

Company Registration number 363004