

East Sussex Association of Blind and Partially Sighted People

Spring 2017

Newsletter

Letter from the Chief Executive

So another year here at ESAB. I've been here for six years now, and I can honestly say I love every minute of it, even the challenging parts! I love driving Ada to the Theatre, I love discussing the intricacies of the shredder with Colin and I love the opportunity to make a local council sit up and understand why lights on a pedestrian crossing are so vital for someone with Macular Degeneration.

I am pleased to say that both Brighton City Council and East Sussex County Council have renewed our contracts so we will continue to provide vital services for another year at least!

Some news about our Brighton Social Groups. City Synergy joined us about two years ago and continue to provide excellent social activities across Brighton and Hove. The Brighton VIP's have joined forces with them to enable members of both groups to access all their collective activities.

Don't miss the Friends of ESAB activities or the Outreach Vehicle this summer.

My thanks to the Friends of ESAB who donated £10,000 to us in the last financial year and are already well on the way to equalling that again this year. Here's a great picture of the plant stall from the open garden they arranged. Lovely lunches and teas as well as a beautiful garden to look around.

At the AGM held in October 2016 it was agreed that from the 1st April 2017 ESAB would no longer charge a membership fee. With the complexities of collecting the fee along with the various grants and contracts we hold, it was getting increasingly difficult to manage the process and it was not producing a very large income. So from the 1st April 2017 we will no longer charge to be a member of ESAB. With this Newsletter you will find a request for an annual donation, which is the replacement for the membership fee and I would respectfully ask you all to consider making a small donation towards the work we do. It costs us around £350,000 to carry out our work every year, so anything you feel you can give will help to make the lives of a blind or partially sighted person better.

Thank you

What can a donation to ESAB do?

£10 will pay for Maggie our Low Vision Support Worker, to visit someone in their home

£25 will pay for Rachael to provide three mobility sessions to get someone out and about in their community

£50 will pay for the Outreach Vehicle to visit a lunch club and provide vital information and equipment to a group of vulnerable people

£100 will pay for a training course that will help newly diagnosed people to come to terms with their condition and build their confidence

Vision Zone Days

ESAB in conjunction with Optelec are putting on two "Vision Zone Days" in late April.

We have one taking place in Uckfield on the 26th April and the other at the Brighthelm Centre on the 27th. All ESAB members, their families and friends are welcome.

Optelec will have both electronic and optical aids on display with expert help available. We are also expecting Calibre, Guide Dogs and a range of other exhibitors to be in attendance.

Venue, Addresses, Dates and Times

Uckfield

Wednesday 26th April 11.00am to 2.00pm

The Civic Centre-Weald Hall

Belfarm Lane

Uckfield

TN22 1AE

Brighton and Hove

Thursday 27th April 10.00am to 1.30pm

Brighthelm Centre

North Road

Brighton

BN1 1YD

New Products

The RNIB are now doing a talking combined Kitchen Scale and Measuring Jug. The jug acts as a mixing bowl as well. The speech is very clear with a male voice. The scales measure in both pounds and ounces as well as grams. The liquid measurement is in millilitres. RNIB DK152. Price: £46.95.

Nimble 1 Finger Cutting Tool. This is a very simple little tool. Very much like a thimble, it's shaped to fit on an index finger and has a small ceramic blade that can be used to cut paper, Sellotape etc. There is a small area of raised bumps on the inside of the tool, this enables you to make sure that you have the blade in the correct position. RNIB DH407. Price: £8.95.

MAGnificent Floor and Table LED Magnifying Light. This light has proved very popular. It has a 1.75X lens that measures 5.75 inches in diameter. There are several LED lights around the edge of the lens giving a really good spread of light in exactly the area that you need it. The base is weighted and you have a choice of 3 heights for the light. RNIB DH360. Price: £59.95.

Portable Cassette Recorder. This recorder is not a lot bigger than the cassette itself. We have found over time, that many people don't get on well with digital voice recorders. Having a familiar method of making audio notes of telephone numbers, addresses etc. is very welcome. Cobolt Portable Cassette Recorder. Price: £29.95. Blank cassettes are also available over the phone from Cobolt.

Talking Watch shop. This company has a range of talking watches from the very simple Verbalise top Button Digital Radio Controlled Watch to the range of talking watches with a touch of class. These watches aren't just practical, they also look fashionable. Prices range from £20 to £150.

Getting A Disc That Is Stuck Out Of A Daisy Player

You know what it's like when you are reading a talking book on your Daisy Player and the disc gets stuck. Well, there is an easy way of getting them out. Thanks to Alan, the husband of one of our members, I am able

to let everyone else know the simple way that should work.

When the disc is stuck and pressing the eject button is having no effect, turn the machine off. Then press and hold the eject button. After 10 seconds, still holding the eject button down, turn the machine on again. I've been told that it works, the disc will magically be set free. No more banging the machine or poking knives or the like inside, much safer!

We say goodbye to Hayley (on the right of the picture) and hello to Chloe (on the left of the picture). Hayley has been Steve Saunders's PA for the last six months and Chloe takes over from now. Thank you Hayley for everything you have done for ESAB we will miss you!

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

ESAB People

Hello, my name is Christine Ward and I am proud to say I am a VIP as not only am I a Vision Impaired Person as I believe we who are affected by the varying degrees of sight loss are Very Important People!

For several years I couldn't find paid employment due to outdated ideas towards employing a person with a sight problem. But then in late 2015 ESAB sent me a link informing me of THE SWIFT PROJECT and I was very fortunate to be selected for the SWIFT Women in East Sussex Business course for self-employment. Through their professional tuition and guidance I gained the

incentive and knowledge to set myself up as self-employed and Ability-to-Access was born!

In my experience I find a lot of people need not only a trained professional who can help and support them, but also have real, intelligent conversations and be able to do what you the client chooses. So if you feel you may benefit from my experience, approach and service, please do get in touch or pass on my details. I have also worked with clients living with Alzheimer's.

My ethos and philosophy is "how would you feel?"

A 1-2-1 Support & Lifestyle Worker service

Helping you to access the information and support you need to improve your life and ability!

Email: abilityaccess@talktalk.net Tel: 07942 493177

Web: www.a-2-a.co.uk

ESAB Services

It might surprise you how much ESAB has to offer

Specifically for East Sussex

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 Centres in Hailsham and Brighton

Volunteer visiting scheme with 50 volunteers

Six social groups

Central services from ESAB

20 Social Groups. Including:

ESAB Theatre Group

Bowls club

City Synergy and

Sound Tennis Sussex

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

City Synergy and Brighton VIPs to merge

Two of ESAB's social groups in Brighton and Hove are to join up with the aim of developing their range of activities and services

Paul Gillett, Chair of City Synergy said "Our aim is that this will build on the successes of the two groups over the years, quite a few people are members of both groups and we hope each groups strengths will continue in the future"

Plans are already in progress for activities through the summer and this will also help us as we link in to the services such as training provided through the ESAB offices in Hove and Hailsham.

Social activities for people with sight loss, in the Brighton and Hove Area

Website: www.citysynergy.org.uk

Contact details:

Paul (01273) 697339

Iris (01273) 724646

E-mail: citysynergy@yahoo.co.uk

There's so much going on at your local ESAB Social Group

A full list of the social groups can be found on the back of this newsletter.

Although the first couple of months of 2017 saw a chilly start to the year, all the social groups have been warming up by putting their programmes together for the year, and it looks as though there will be some very nice lunch outings to look forward to in the coming months.

Lewes and SPA both started the year in very healthy fashion keeping fit with Ffion and her chair-based exercise sessions, which was one way to work off those Christmas Dinners, and in Brighton they have been enjoying skittles and Boccia, which for anyone who's not sure is indoor bowls, which can get very competitive indeed!

While mentioning Lewes, Diana has asked if any readers know of anyone who would like to be a volunteer driver for the group to please get in touch. They meet every second Monday in Ringmer.

In February, The Tuesday Club had a special reason to celebrate, with a 35th Birthday bash at Bodle Street

Green village hall, with the entertainment being provided by 'Just George', and judging by the number of people up dancing a good time was certainly had by all.

Hot off the press – In Brighton, City Synergy and the VIP's are joining forces. Combining the groups would not only allow us to share volunteer support and resources, but it will also open up new opportunities for the members of both groups.

Finally some sad news from Rye – The Rye and Winchelsea social group who have been supporting ESAB members in the east of the county living as far away as Fairlight to Camber has sadly come to a close. The organisers Jim, Noel and Don after over 25 years' sterling service and dedication between them have decided to retire, and we send them our sincerest thanks and best wishes for the future.

Volunteering Onwards and Upwards!

Volunteering can be so rewarding. Safe in the knowledge you are helping someone with sight loss maintain their independence. Volunteering is also a great opportunity to meet new people and make new friends.

Whatever your role, whether it be at head office, as a social group helper or driver, out on the road, or as a

home visitor, you can be sure someone will appreciate you for giving up your time.

Our Home Visiting befriending volunteer service is now spreading gradually from its traditional heartland in Brighton and Hove throughout the county, and we now have a waiting list stretching right across East Sussex

If any readers know of anyone who might be interested in volunteering, please do let us know here at head office, and don't forget, all new volunteers receive vision awareness training and reimbursement of mileage expenses.

Of the training, one participant recently said "It was exactly what I needed to give me confidence in communicating with a visually impaired person"

To any existing volunteers or social groups out there if you would like a vision awareness training refresher, please get in touch and let us know and we'll put something together for you either in Hailsham or Hove.

For further information on Volunteering for ESAB please contact Ian at HQ on 01323 832252 or ian@eastsussexblind.org

Outreach Vehicle

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

Just call the office and ask for Danielle 01323 832252

The Outreach Vehicle continues to visit a range of public venues and local community groups across the county. Last year we met a grand total of 468 people over 32 Outreach Vehicle visits. But 2017 looks set to be an even better year as we'll be supporting some exciting events this summer, such as:

Uckfield Lions' Fun Day - Sunday 4th June

Eastbourne Pride - Saturday 22nd July

Hailsham Lions' Fun Day – Sunday 23rd July

ESAB members are always welcome to take part in Outreach Vehicle visits and help us raise awareness of sight loss. Just phone our head office for more information about how to get involved!

RNIB Library services available to ESAB clients

ESAB library service has now closed but the RNIB provides a free Talking Book service on memory stick.

The RNIB have a wide variety of books and volunteers to help you if needed. All you need to do is register for this service which can be done in several ways:

Over the phone 0303 123 9999

Online via the online shop, just add the free subscription to the basket. Using the website

<http://shop/rnib.org/talking-books-subscription>

By post

If you decide to join the RNIB library you may need a memory stick player. ESAB can loan you this if required, just let us know.

Please contact us if you need further information or help registering please contact Fiona or Claire on 01323 832252.

East Sussex County Council Adult Social Care Helpline is now open from 7am to 7pm 7 days a week. 0345 69 80 191

Guide runner for visually impaired people

Trained with England Athletics on Sight loss awareness & guide running

Support for any level of runner

Completely new to experienced, casual running or organised events, reasonable radius of Hailsham/Eastbourne DBS registered for online checking

Adrian Thomas Turn Goals into Reality Coaching 07584 906061

The Royal National College for the blind

RNC is proud to offer a range of courses at various levels to both students aged 16 to 25 and adult trainees aged 18 to 65

Call us on 01432 376 621 or email info@rnc.ac.uk

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:

- Bexhill 1st Friday
- Crowborough 3rd Friday
- Herstmonceux 3rd Wednesday
- VitalEYES (Brighton and Hove) 1st Friday
- Lewes 2nd Monday
- Polegate 4th Tuesday
- SocialEYES (Brighton and Hove) 3rd Friday
- Seaford 1st Thursday
- Saltdean & Peacehaven 4th Monday
- Tuesday Club 2nd Tuesday (In the evening)
- Uckfield 1st Wednesday
- Brighton VIPs 4th Thursday
- Brighton Deaf/Blind Group 1st Wednesday

Theatre Group

Bowls Group

City Synergy

Sound Tennis Sussex

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

East Sussex Association of Blind and Partially Sighted
People

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