DONATION FORM

Please remove this page from the bulletin and return it with your donation in the pre-paid envelope provided.

I wish to make a voluntary donation of **£**……..……which is enclosed.

(Please make cheques payable to **ESAB**)

If you wish to pay by Standing Order we will be pleased to send the appropriate form.

To save our costs, a receipt will not be sent unless you specifically require one.

Boost your donation by 25p of Gift Aid for every £1 you donate
GIFT AID DECLARATION

In order to **Gift Aid** your donation you must **tick** the box below:

☐ I want to Gift Aid my donation of £…….. and any donations I make in the future or have made in the past 4 years to The East Sussex Association of Blind & Partially Sighted People.

I am a UK taxpayer and understand that if I pay less Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations in that tax year it is my responsibility to pay any difference.

Name:

Address:

Post code: **Tel No:**

Email Address: **Date:**

East Sussex Association of Blind and Partially Sighted People

Spring 2020

Newsletter

ESAB

We are all finding different things to keep us busy during these unbelievable times its almost like a Science Fiction Movie. Speaking to members, some are painting, some cooking, some gardening and some doing housework as their cleaners cannot visit. I'm cooking cakes galore and gardening.

Speaking to one member we found that we had one thing in common. In the last war we both spent most of the days playing with our toys under the very large kitchen table. Facetime seems the popular way to stay in touch, and if there is any good to come out of this Lockdown period, it is how important family and friends are. Our Social Group meetings are so important to our members and all are hoping they can continue again in the not too distant future.

Joyce Chapman, Herstmonceux Social Group Volunteer

We at ESAB are very sorry but we have not been able to provide this newsletter in any other form other than large print. We have not been able to record the datastick version for our members. I hope those of you who are not able to read the bulletin are able to find a friend or relative to read it to you. We sincerely hope that the next bulletin will be in every form and available to all our members.

Daniel Brookbank CEO

Head Office 01323 832252 info@eastsussexblind.org

A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

The picture shows Ian Fletcher-Price

I do hope we will very soon see the beginning of the return to life as we want it to be. Although inevitably some mistakes will have been made (with the benefit of hindsight) I do think on the whole the Government has done well and is positioning us to recover as quickly as possible. The outstanding thing I have noticed is how our community spirit has kicked in and I find that very encouraging. In our case, all the work the social groups have been doing to stay in touch with their members and providing comfort and companionship. I know post lockdown there will be specific issues for our members around distancing and other new phenomena that we will have to address together and I'm sure we'll adapt to these new challenges with the same good spirit. Funding will be more challenging but I am confident we can hold our own and I will be paying particular attention to this over the coming months. As ever, Daniel continues to do a great job and we are lucky to have him looking after all our interests. Thank you Daniel, and the staff, on behalf of everyone involved with ESAB.

Ian Fletcher-Price, Chairman ESAB

INFORMATION

During these lockdown times some of our services are being offered in a different way. Please give HQ a ring on 01323 832252 or email info@eastsussexblind.org for further information

Specifically for East Sussex

- Low Vision Support Worker
- Reablement services
- Certificates of visual impairment
- Aids and Equipment service
- Information and Advice

In Brighton & Hove

- Full time Co-Ordinator
- Aids and Equipment service
- Volunteer visiting scheme
- Six social groups

Central services from ESAB

- 17 Social Groups.
- Outreach Vehicle (OV)
- ESAB telephone helpline
- Advocacy help for members
- Lobbying local and central government
- Working with local planners
- Regular membership Newsletter
- Aids and Equipment
- Friends of ESAB
- Annual well-being call to all members

Domestic abuse and sexual violence services are open and here to help.

The greater number of people staying indoors for long periods means instances of domestic abuse may be on the rise. We know that in the current climate, it is more challenging for those suffering abuse. Lines of communication could be severely limited if victims are unable to leave the home. We want to reassure those experiencing abuse that they are not alone.

People in East Sussex needing help, advice or support on domestic abuse and sexual violence can contact The Portal on 0300 323 9985 or visit the Safe In East Sussex webpage https://www.safeineastsussex.org.uk/domestic-abuse-help.html

The stay-at-home instruction as a result of COVID-19 does not apply if you need to leave your home to escape domestic abuse.

INFORMATION

Help in Brighton and Hove

The Brighton and Hove coronavirus help support is available either on the telephone on 01273 293117 (option 2) or via their website at
www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/coronavirus-help

The helpline will assist with finding help with shopping, collecting prescriptions, and other support. They will refer to emergency food banks, give advice on keeping active, and assist with feelings of loneliness and isolation.

Other help in Brighton and Hove includes:

Brighton and Hove food partnership www.bhfood.org.uk/coronavirus-update

Mental Health Community roots 0808 196 1768

Carers hub 01273 977000

Feeling lonely together 01273 775888

Older people aged well 07770 061072

Domestic violence and abuse portal 0300 323 9985
www.theportal.org.uk

Cruise bereavement care 0808 808 1677

Brighton and Hove City Council services:
Help with essentials 01273 293117 (option 1)
Wellbeing and healthy lifestyles team 01273 294589
Adult social Care 01273 295555
Children's services 01273 290400
Support for businesses www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/coronavirus-covid-19/business-and-employers

ANNUAL DONATION

We would be most grateful if you might consider making an annual donation to the society to assist us with our work. In particular this year we have had to cancel some vital summer fundraising activities which have left a hole in our budget. A donation to help us cover this loss and to assist us through this difficult period would be most welcome.

On the back of this bulletin you will find a donation form, please detach it and send it with your donation in the pre-paid envelope provided. Thank you.

£10.00 will pay for our initial telephone helpline and new referral welcome pack, signposting our members to a wealth of information and advice when they need it most.

£25.00 will pay for our Low Vision Support Worker, Maggie, to assist someone who is struggling to get essential paperwork finished for a benefits claim

£50.00 will pay for our Brighton Co-ordinator, Sue, to set up a conference Quiz for 30 members who are stuck in isolation

£75.00 will pay for our essential telephone helpline to operate for a week, meaning Members can get the help they need at these challenging times

£100.00 will cover the cost of Aids and Equipment Officer to provide a drop off service right across the county.

Do you follow us on Twitter?
@eastsussexblind or
@CEOESAB
Please like us on Facebook
Facebook.com/eastsussexblind

A MESSAGE FROM

Hello all. I am writing this from my very temporary home office as we have all gone home to work. As you can see from the picture below, space is at a premium!

These are very difficult times for so many of our members. Forced isolation, problems and challenges with simple tasks like shopping and social distancing proving to be much harder than you'd expect. Supermarkets didn't want to recognise blind and partially sighted people as vulnerable so shopping has become very difficult. Thankfully solved via lobbying from amongst others, us.

It was with a very heavy heart that I decided to close down the social groups, in fact we would have been forced to do so. These groups are a vital element of the service we offer at ESAB as they help to get people out and about, allow them to meet up with friends and reduce isolation and loneliness. So shutting them down was hard.

Our Low Vision Service across East Sussex and Brighton and Hove has changed, at the moment Sue and Maggie are available but not visiting. Our members are relying on them for a whole range of help.

The picture to the right shows Daniel Brookbank in his home office

INFORMATION

Help in East Sussex

East Sussex Community Hubs

Community hubs are the contact point that residents of East Sussex

Who can use a community hub?

Anyone who feels they need extra support and has no other way to get it can use a hub.

Who may need support from a hub

Vulnerable people and Shielded people

Contact a hub if you're: alone, worried, unwell, short of money, can't get medicine, food or other essentials

AND

there is no one living near you who you know and can trust to help.

Or if your GP has told you that you have an extreme medical condition

Contact your local community hub

There are five hubs – one in each part of the county. They are usually open during working hours, 9am to 5pm, although this will vary slightly from hub to hub. Each one can be reached online or by phone.

Eastbourne

Website: Lewes and Eastbourne Councils
Phone: 01323 679722

Hastings

Website: Hastings Borough Council
Phone: 01424 451019

Lewes

Website: Lewes and East-bourne Councils
Phone: 01273 099956

Rother

Website: Rother District Council
Phone: 01424 787000 (option 4)

Wealden

Website: Wealden District Council
Phone: 01323 443322

Don't forget, you can still contact us at ESAB on 01323 832252 or email info@eastsussexblind.org

INFORMATION

Keeping connected
During this time, it's especially important you stay connected with the outside world; whether it's having Skype calls with family and friends, joining a Talk and Support group through the RNIB Helpline or signing up to a Keeping in Touch call with Guide Dogs. There are many sight loss forums available and most are open to your family and friends too. Having regular contact with people will help you to stay feeling positive.

If you also want to stay connected with the latest developments and information on coronavirus (COVID-19) and sight loss, listen to RNIB Connect Radio, the UK's radio station for blind and partially sighted people. It's available on Freeview 730 and online www.rnibconnectradio.org.uk

ESAB Telephone Helpline 01323 832252 or email info@eastsussexblind.org

RNIB's Helpline (0303 123 9999) is open from 8am-8pm on weekdays and on Saturdays from 9am-5pm.

Guide Dogs' COVID-19 information line (0800 781 1444) is open on weekdays (from 9am-5pm).

We know this is a difficult time and many people are feeling worried and isolated. These are just a few of the ways we can help you during this time - there is lots more advice for blind and partially sighted people available. So, please get in touch if we can help.

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

THE CEO

But despite the challenges this dreadful virus throws at us, I want to tell you about the amazing work that is still going on at ESAB, and ask you to consider making a small donation towards our work. You can use the form on the back of this bulletin and the enclosed pre-paid envelope.

I asked the committees of the social groups to keep in touch with their members and they have risen to the challenge. I am constantly hearing wonderful stories about help and care coming our from the groups and I pay tribute to you all who are working so hard, thank you.

Over the first few weeks of lockdown Sue Fever built up an amazing database of help in local communities, to the point that we now have information from every corner of the county and can get practical help from a huge range of voluntary and community organisations. Food, medications, help with moving house, help when a loved one goes into hospital, you name it we can now, probably find it. Both Sue and Maggie are working tirelessly to ensure that members are not left alone without help. Both can be contacted via HQ.

Steve and his assistant David have the Aids and Equipment service running smoothly and are able to get equipment sent directly out to you in a matter of days. Although, at the moment they are not visiting, they will give every assistance they can, you only need to ring the HQ telephone number.

Claire, Fiona and I are beavering away from home keeping everything running, Fiona is on the phones, Claire on the computers and me? I'm doing just about anything!

So please be assured, we are still here, still helping and ready to get the organisation back to what it was as soon as this awful thing is over. Thank you.

WE'RE STILL HERE!

Just a quick paragraph to let you know that although working from home, I am still dealing with the Eye Hospital and clinics with requests from members who are unsure about appointments or indeed just need some help as their eyes have deteriorated.
I've been in talks with Social Services to get assistance for our members, and secure temporary care for those who need it.
The department of works and pensions are still asking for members to proceed with their claims for attendance allowance, so although it's on the phone, it's still working well.
I have taken broken glasses to the local optician who has been more than helpful.
All the new referrals that have come through are still receiving an initial call with a view to a visit (if required) after the lockdown

Maggie Grinyer Low Vision Support Officer

The picture shows Maggie Grinyer working from home

My assistant, David and I are both still working as best we can from home. Many of you won't have met or have known about David, he has taken over from Chloe and he's proving to be a great hit with both members and staff!

We have an early morning phone call every day and are still dealing with ordering items and helping our members as we can.

If you need any help or advice, please give us a call and we will get back to you as soon as we are able.

One of our suppliers has suggested that if any of our members who are in "Lock Down" need something to keep them occupied, they can supply items like Large Print Crosswords, Word Searches etc.

INFORMATION

In conjunction with the RNIB and Guide Dogs, here is some helpful information, in particular, how to get in touch with local and national organisations that may be able to help you at this time.

Finding local support
Communities across the UK have mobilised so they can help people who need additional support locally. We have put together a list of organisations across East Sussex, Brighton and Hove who can help you. This information is available through the ESAB Telephone Helpline on 01323 832252 or by emailing info@eastsussexblind.org

Local authorities can also provide essential supplies.

Eye Health

During this time, you may be concerned about attending eye clinic appointments. Hospitals have rearranged their clinics to reduce the risk and minimise contact with other patients and staff. You can always call the hospital to seek advice. If you have a sudden change in your vision or new symptoms, contact your optician or eye doctor immediately. It is important you seek help, please don't ignore symptoms.

Shopping for food and essentials
Supermarkets are changing their delivery services to prioritise the needs of clinically vulnerable people, but we know many people are still struggling. If you are worried we can help.

Getting out and about
Although social distancing can be difficult, it's really important for your mental and physical health that you still go outside and get exercise. So, if you don't live with someone who is able to guide you, think about using your cane to alert people to your sight loss when you go out. Alternatively, you can let others know of your proximity verbally and that you are unaware of exactly where they are.

Continued over the page….

INSPIRATION

On April 19th I was due to run the 10k at the Brighton marathon weekend to raise funds for ESAB, Unfortunately like many similar events this had to be postponed due to COVID-19.

Events like marathons raise significant amounts that allow charities large and small to continue to fund their services and the loss of this income is already putting these services under great pressure and for some at risk of closure

The organisers therefore initiated the 2.6 challenge which launched on the day of the London Marathon 26th April encouraging people of all abilities and ages to do something with a 2.6 or 26 in and raise or donate money for the charity of their choice, this could be something physical like running, walking, skipping or for the less energetic making cakes to give to neighbours or a care home or NHS staff or offering to volunteer for 26 hours or learning something like BSL or the Braille alphabet

The challenge can be done any time and the website to use is:

https://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/fundraiser-display/showROFundraiserPage?userUrl=PaulGillett3&pageUrl=1.

You can contact me through the ESAB facebook page or via the ESAB office if you need help with this.

So far we have raised £269 through this challenge, plus £143 which has been raised for my 10K run and will be carried forward to when it is possible for the run to take place

Thank you to all who have contributed to date, it is greatly appreciated and will make a real difference to ESAB's work during and after the pandemic.

Paul Gillett

ESAB STAFF

They can also supply Large and Giant Print Playing cards as well! Should you need Pens, then we have both Broad and Fine available.

Keeping yourself busy and finding things to do at the moment can be difficult, so, if you think that we may be able to help, contact us and we will do our best to help. Whether it's getting yourself busy in the kitchen, or occupying your mind, we will see what we can do.

Steve Saunders Aids and Equipment Officer

Here's a little update on how things are going in Brighton and Hove:

It does feel strange to be working from home, not seeing clients, social group members, work colleagues, friends, or family members. Each morning depending upon the weather and my husband's messy DIY schedule for the day, I get to choose which office to work from. Kitchen office, Conservatory office or if I'm really lucky, my Garden office. It's a much shorter journey to work now.

Every morning Daniel (the boss) wishes all the staff good morning via social media and we catch up on any important news. Then it's put a wash load on and get down to work.

During this period we are continuing to be available and provide as many of our services as we can remotely and at a distance. We're still taking referrals, still offering advice, information, and offering emotional and practical support

In addition to our normal services we have expanded to offer comprehensive up to date information on all types of local help across the areas available to people during this lockdown period.

Continued on the next page…...

ESAB STAFF

We know how difficult this time can be, so with the help of volunteers and staff members we're keeping in touch with many members by telephone. Mostly the calls are for a cheery chat, but they're also a good opportunity for you to let us know about any problems you may be having during lockdown. I've had many gardening tips during these conversations, especially on tomato cultivation. So much so that my tomatoes plants are now competing with me for space in my conservatory office. If you would like someone to call you, please do get in touch.

Our Brighton and Hove team of Home visiting volunteers are unable to visit in person during this time, but they too are keeping in touch via telephone.

Our Aids and Equipment service is also predominately working from home but able to deliver some items (at a distance) if necessary.

Social groups all had to close and have been unable to meet since the beginning of lockdown which is a real shame. But we're keeping in touch with the members weekly and I'm currently investigating ways to facilitate the groups remotely.

Remember I'm here at the end of the phone if you need any advice, support, information or would just like a chat.

Sue Fever

The picture above shows Sue Fever hard at work surrounded by her tomato plants

SOCIAL GROUPS

Everyone misses our Social Group when members meet with friends for a good chat.

We have stayed in contact with our members. The drivers are in regular contact with those they drive. Joyce and I have made regular phone calls to other members.

We all seem to be keeping busy doing a variety of things - some we would not normally do!

The weather over recent weeks has been a bonus with many people being active in the garden. Some more productive than others!

Over the VE celebrations my thoughts were with our members. A lot of whom were born before the outbreak of war, like myself. Six of our Group would have seen active service or been in the Land Army or Home Guard. We all have memories of the war, I have, in particular it was the sound of the bombs landing and the windows shattering. I remember being quite frightened.

It is such a shame we were not able to be together to share our memories. I found the coverage of VE Day very moving, as I am sure a lot of ESAB members did.

Over this period of isolation my garden has taken up some of my time which has been most enjoyable. I have also been knitting, not something I normally, blankets for the Alzheimer's Unit at the hospital and playing bridge online with friends from my bridge club.

One must look forward to healthier and happy times when we can see our loved ones and our social groups can meet again.

Until then keep safe.

Sue Slade, Trustee of ESAB and Chairman Herstmonceux Social Group