# East Sussex Vision Support

## NEWSLETTER - Spring 2022

## Welcome to our Spring Bulletin

### How to contact ESVS.

You can find us at

13 Vicarage Field, Hailsham, BN27 1BD.

Our telephone number is 01323 832252.

Contact us via email,
info@eastsussexvisionsupport.org

or visit our website,
www.eastsussexvisionsupport.org

# Messages from our Chairman and CEO

Welcome to our Spring newsletter and welcome to our new Patron, Mr Andrew Blackman the Lord Lieutenant of East Sussex, I had the pleasure of meeting him at the ESVS Gala Dinner to celebrate our 100th Birthday My thanks to all of you who celebrated with us, we had an amazing evening that really put ESVS at the centre of the celebrations.

My thanks, as always, to all the volunteers and staff who are working very hard to ensure that our members can access the very best care. It's great that so many social groups are up and running again now.

**Picture shows Ian Fletcher-Price**

I'm amazed that I've been here at ESVS for 11 years now and I am still honoured to be representing all of you and endeavouring to make sure that blind and partially sighted people across the county get the equality and opportunities that should be a given. Still I see instances of in-equality and second class citizenship. On a recent episode of 'The Repair Shop' the present managed to use the words 'The Blind' no less than five times, yes I have complained. Fighting for equality is a key element in what we do and I'm very pleased to say that I will be representing all of you very soon at a meeting with a group of local MP's to discuss E-Scooters and Bicycles on the pavement.

If you fancy a night out, on the 17th May, the Rushlake Players are putting on a special charity performance of The Sound Of Music for us. Please come along and support them as proceeds are going to ESVS. More information can be found on page 9 of this bulletin.

**Picture shows Daniel Brookbank**

# FUNDRAISING & DONATIONS

We would be most grateful if you might consider making an annual donation to the society to assist us with our work. In particular over the last year we have had to cancel some vital 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 newsletter you will find a donation form, please detach it and send it with your donation in the pre-paid envelope provided. Alternatively you can ring our HQ on 01323 832252 and we can take a donation directly over the phone.

**£10.00** will pay for our telephone helpline 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, to assist someone who is struggling to get essential paperwork finished for a benefits claim

**£75.00** will pay for our essential aids and equipment Officer to get vital equipment to members during these challenging times

Thank you

**Alternatively you can donate via our Just Giving page, just visit**

**www.justgiving.com/eastsussexvisionsupport**

"Hi/hello, my name is **Christine Ward**,

From **Dance-Ability - Exercise to Music.**
I am also a **VIP** so understand **VIP/Blind people's** needs for keeping fit and active.

My logo is a circular/round shape with a **pink/purple** outline.

In a black background with 3-3D images of me.
**1 Purple, 1 pink,** & **1 mauve** exercising to music.
I have designed a **fun, effective way to help keep you fit** and **active at home, if you find attending Exercise To Music classes difficult for your visual needs.** There are **4 ETM videos on my website ALL with professional audio description.**

**Low to Medium, to High Levels for approx 40 minutes each.**

**I qualified in 2019** as an **ETM Level 2 Instructor.**

I am **Liability Insured. I can see; bodies, shapes, colours.**

**Please note the pre-health and safety advice before participating.**

To view the **FREE 5 minute intros** for **each ETM video**

www.a-2-a.co.uk/dance-ability

For the **Dance-Ability** link/page.

Then go to the **Ability to Access Payment Page.**

I will then send you a **personal password link** to **download** the **4 videos. ESVS members, volunteers** *and* **staff can purchase ALL the videos** for just **£10.00.**

**I also PLEDGE** to **ESVS £5** for **each video sold** if you **put ESVS on/in/beside your payment clearly marked in bold CAPS please.**

**(for me to be able to see)!!!**

**I am based in Bexhill, East Sussex** and looking for **venues in your area. To do my ETM sessions for VIPS & Blind people** and for **everyone with access needs. Private sessions can be arranged for 2+ persons in you homes if safe** *and* **accessable.**

**Being vision impaired** and **blind should not stop us from "Moving, & Grooving** AND **keeping fit & active.**

East Sussex
Vision Support

## ESVS Welcomes Mr Andrew Blackman, Lord Lieutenant of East Sussex, as their new Patron

We are delighted that Mr Blackman has agreed to take the role of Patron at ESVS. All of us here at ESVS extend a warm welcome to him and our heartfelt thanks to Sir Peter Field for all he has done for us and wish him and Lady Field a wonderful retirement.

Mr Blackman said:

“I was delighted to be invited to become your new Patron, taking over the role from Sir Peter Field who retired as Lord-Lieutenant last August.

Sir Peter is a hard act to follow, and I know that he is rightly held in great affection by you all. But I was touched to be made so welcome by all those whom I met at our (much delayed!) Gala Dinner in February, at which we were finally able to celebrate the 100th birthday of East Sussex Vision Support. What an extraordinary achievement a centenary is for any charity, and it is a great testament to your resilience, commitment, hard work and adaptability that you have reached that fabulous milestone. I very much look forward to learning more about the work of ESVS, to meeting many of you, and to working alongside you for years to come.”

**Picture shows Andrew Blackman Lord Lieutenant of East Sussex**

# Aids & Equipment

Here we are with another update for the ESVS Newsletter.  Where does the time go?

There have been some new products that have come out over the last few weeks, but most have been new or variations of lamps and lights and talking watches.  As you are aware, we have our Resource Room at the Hailsham HQ, and we will be happy to arrange appointments so that you can look at equipment.

We do have some second-hand equipment now, including Desktop CCTV Magnifiers and Daisy Players.  As we get pieces of equipment in all the time, it's always worth giving us a call to see if we have what you're looking for. Alternatively, if you have pieces of equipment that you no longer use, then give us a call and we will be happy to have it and pass it on to someone else who will be able to use it.

We are running out of the RNIB Daily Living Catalogues as they are going to print a new one very soon but if there is something that you are looking for, we can always send you the pages for individual items.

We are always happy to arrange home demonstrations by the local area reps for the major suppliers of larger, more expensive items and they are always happy to carry out these demonstrations.

For any help or advice on equipment, give us a call on 01323 832 252.

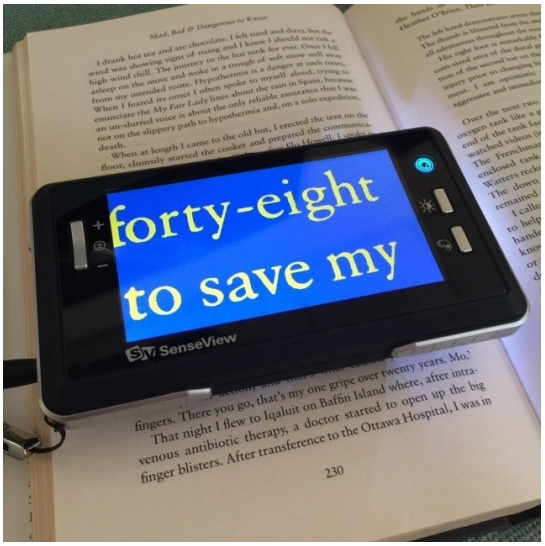
Steve and Gez.

**The pictures show a selection of second-hand equipment available at  ESVS HQ**

**The Picture shows the ESVS Outreach Vehicle visiting Defiant Sports**

Hello, here is a little information to let you know about the Outreach Vehicle. Over the last few months since Lock Down started, the Outreach vehicle has been out of commission. I am glad to say that this is no longer the case. It's back out on the road and I am looking for venues where I can bring it. I have had some success in finding some places already, but if anyone has any suggestions where it might be possible to bring the ESVS Outreach Vehicle and be able to park with access so that people can get on and take a look at what we have on board, that would be great!

The Outreach Vehicle has a display of equipment on board, the most popular and most asked for items . It will give you a chance to try some of them and even buy some things on the spot. If I don't have it in stock, then I can always get the items ordered for you.



## Blind Parents UK

Our services are *completely free* and offered by our dedicated team of volunteers, *all* of whom have a visual impairment themselves.
We *never* turn down enquiries from family members, friends or professionals and we will help in whatever way we can. Have an occasional question that needs answering, or want everything we can give you? *We're here!*
We support first time parents-to-be, through to great grandparents, and our lively community sees a *constant* flow of questions, information and stories from our active members.
We are very proud of our peer-support model, believing the best people to help are those who have been through similar situations.
**Website: www.blindparents.uk Telephone: 01905886252**
**E-Mail: info@blindparents.uk** For enquiries 24/7

### Sound Tennis Update - Anyone for Tennis

It has been good to have a full year back after the lockdowns and we have enjoyed some great tennis sessions, it has been good to welcome new players and our thanks go to our coach Adam Webb, coaching assistant Tim Brickell and all the volunteers.

Following the closure of Virgin Active last November we returned to organising sessions at Withdean Sports Centre, generally we run 2 sessions per month on Sunday afternoons which we have now split between B1s (totally blind) and B2-4 (partially sighted) using sound balls which are spongey and can be heard when they bounce

We also run outdoor sessions on Tuesday afternoons at the Pavilion & Avenue Tennis Club subject to weather. Where practical we use the standard tennis ball on a full court but with extra bounces to allow players to track the ball. As the weather improves, drier and less windy conditions will also make it more possible to use sound balls outdoors

If interested please contact Paul Gillett at tennis@eastsussexvisionsupport.org.

## The Sound of Music

This charming musical is a favourite for people of all ages, written by Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein II and directed by Peter Bowers.

DATES: Tuesday 17 to Saturday 21 May 2022

**CHARITY GALA EVENING – Tuesday 17 May – Ticket price to include a glass of fizz and canapes on arrival. The Village Players will donate £5 from every ticket sold to East Sussex Vision Support.**

TIMES & TICKET PRICES:

All evening shows start at 7:30pm – doors open at 6:45pm. There is a cash bar.

Tues – Charity Gala Evening – £17.50 ticket price to include a £5 donation to East Sussex Vision Support.

Wed to Sat – £15 ticket price.

Sat matinee – 2:30pm start (doors open at 2pm) – £12 ticket price (adult) £5 ticket price (child 12 years or younger).

Tickets will be on sale in April from our website

www.villageplayersrushlakegreen.co.uk

**News from Brighton and Hove by Sue Fever**

How does bulletin time come round so quickly! As I write this, restrictions have been lifted, the fourth jabs are being rolled out, and we are all getting back to a new cautious normal. With summer on its way we are looking forward to extending social activities and reopening the Deaf/ Blind group. Please do get in touch if you have any ideas for activities or would like to come along to any of the Brighton groups.

What a strange year it has been! But hey, it didn't stop the Brighton SocialEYE's social group from celebrating Christmas in style at The Grand Hotel in Brighton. It was certainly an event to remember. Dressed in our very best and wearing posh Christmas hats, we laughed, pulled crackers, chatted a lot, and enjoyed a very special Christmas dinner. We were all treated like royalty by The Grand serving staff who were ready to attend to our needs with an excellent understanding of the difficulties of sight loss. But what really made the event special was "friends getting together" It was just magical!

**The picture on the left shows the very tall and impressive Christmas tree in the foyer of the Grand Hotel.**

**The tip of the tree stretched right the way up to the floor above and was decorated with gold baubles to match the golden spiral Victorian staircase banisters.**

**The picture at the top of the next page shows members seated round dinner tables in the Regent room at The Grand. The Regent room is framed with beautiful wood panelling and was the hotels original library. You can just see Daniel in the distance delivering his after-dinner speech.**

**I would like to say a big thank you to all the volunteers that made this event possible.**

**I would also like to extend a big thank you to all the Brighton and Hove Befriending volunteers who are doing a sterling job of supporting local people with sight loss. Your visits and telephone calls are absolutely invaluable to the wellbeing of the people you support.**

I'm very pleased to say that our Brighton and Hove Volunteer team is growing having welcomed another eight volunteers to Brighton ESVS in the last quarter. But as we emerge from the last few years of isolation and uncertainty the need for more volunteers has also grown. If you know of anyone who would be kind enough to be a volunteer driver or befriender, please do ask them to get in touch. Their help would be greatly appreciated.

Our Brighton volunteer Befriender service can telephone or visit a visually impaired person. They may be asked to read and respond to confidential correspondence, give help with IT , accompany to medical appointments, go for short walks, help to build confidence out and about, or maybe just sit and talk to offer some companionship. Visits can vary depending upon individual circumstances and the duration anything from up to an hour or two. **Whether it's a couple of hours a week, or a month, volunteering has a huge impact on somebody's life.**

With the help of Caroline Mattison (Our Brighton and Hove Higher Intervention Worker) we are here taking referrals, offering advice, information, support, access to aids and equipment, Vision awareness, and emotional and practical support. Please do contact me if you would like any more information or support.

# Low Vision Support

Our long running, successful, Low Vision Service provides a detailed one-to-one package of care that will help you get back on your feet, sort out a range of problems or just provide care and support when you most need it. The service will:

Explain your eye condition

Provide you with information about the clinical services you may need

Refer you onto other available services

Assist you to attend the eye clinic

Direct you to the right benefits

Assist you in getting modern technology to work for you

Help you with appeals

Support you and your loved ones to better understand your condition so you can live a healthy, inclusive life.

A Low Vision Support Worker will contact you by phone initially and then visit you at home. They will run through your condition and enable you to access all the help available, either internally from East Sussex Vision Support or from a huge range of external services. This service is completely free of charge and will normally be completed within six weeks of the initial visit.

The Low Vision Support Workers, along with the Brighton and Hove Co-ordinator, see over 400 people a year in their own homes and have contact with over 1000.

The result of a diagnosis of sight loss can be devastating. This is a crucial time for East Sussex Vision Support to start helping, and by managing the certificates of visual impairment for the county, we can identify people at a very early stage. At present we manage over 300 certificates per year; assisting with referrals, explaining the impact of their diagnosis and helping them to come to terms with the changes.

# Social Inclusion

Social Inclusion is vital to many people and at ESVS we look to provide varied and flexible social events to suit every age and group. Whilst most of our groups are quite traditional, we are constantly exploring new, modern ways of helping people to get together. The groups are looking at using WhatsApp and some already have Facebook pages dedicated to their club. We are actively working with the groups to provide this kind of flexibility and service.

We currently provide 14 social groups run by 200 volunteers. These offer a vital lifeline to over 500 of our members who would experience social isolation and exclusion without the opportunity to get together.

The social groups meet monthly in various locations such as village halls and provide a social atmosphere for up to 60 blind and partially sighted people including, outings, entertainment and the opportunity to meet friends. Our volunteers drive members to the groups, provide refreshments, support and assist, organise entertainment and sit on each group's committee.

Outings can range from trips to gardens, National Trust properties, places of interest, theatre, teas and lunches. All of these would not be possible without the social groups and the help of the volunteers. Thus, ensuring that our members are not excluded because of their visual impairment.

In Brighton and Hove we are now also able to provide a wonderful new group specifically for those who are deaf/blind. This group covers a whole range of ages and abilities and provides some vital social inclusion for the members.

ESVS Viable provide a varied and interesting social diary for younger people living in Brighton and Hove.

The Theatre Club, run by volunteers, takes members to the Devonshire Park Theatre in Eastbourne for Saturday Matinee performances with audio description. The shows vary from Musicals, Dramas and Pantomimes. The Theatre group has 20 members and goes to about 20 shows per year.

# Higher Intervention Service

A new Service to East Sussex Vision Support, the Higher Intervention Service is aimed at assisting clients who have more complex needs or are looking to deal with a range of issues that may be affecting their life. The service will be able to:

Provide one to one support from a member of the team who will work with you for as long as is necessary

Be flexible, enabling you in any way you want or need it to

Look to see if a home visiting volunteer could help you and provide one if we can

Look at essential needs like housing, dealing with sight loss and grief, benefits, Aids and Equipment as well as refer onto other essential services

Work with you to get back into work or to re-train, including accompanying you to help you gain confidence

Help you to access hobbies and interests by getting you involved in a local group that interests you

See if a specialist volunteer might be able to help you with specific issues

The Higher Intervention Worker will make initial telephone contact with you and then visit you at home to talk about the issues you have and how we can help. They will put together a plan and ensure that you are able to reach your goals. This service is completely free to clients.

This service is funded by The National Lottery Community Fund.

COMMUNITY FUND

We support people and communities to thrive.

The National Lottery Community Fund

## TELEPHONE HELPLINE - 01323 832252

**Our Telephone Helpline is based locally at our Hailsham HQ. The service is available from Monday to Thursday 9am to 4.30pm. The telephone helpline will assist you with:**

**General information about East Sussex Vision Support and the services we offer**

**Information about other services available across the county and nationally**

There are lots of ways to get in touch with us, you can phone us, email us, visit us on Facebook, go to our website or scan on the QR code to find us.

**t.** 01323 832252
**e.** info@eastsussexvisionsupport.org
**w.** eastsussexvisionsupport.org
**a.** 13 Vicarage Field, Hailsham, East Sussex, BN27 1BD

East Sussex
**Vision Support**

# The Tuesday Club

The Tuesday Club is a very friendly group with members of various ages, skills & abilities.

We do a range of activities so that we can include something for everyone's taste such as Ten Pin Bowling, a Quiz evening with a buffet, meals out in various restaurants & games evenings.

We are always pleased to receive suggestions from members with regards to new activities or venues for a meal.

As the name suggests we meet on the 2nd Tuesday evening of every month & our new home venue for quiz & games nights is the Polegate Community Centre.

The PCC is a 7-minute walk from the rail station/bus stop making it easy for members who wish to come by public transport

We are currently making some changes, looking to the future & how we can encourage new members to join.

One aim is to enable members to set up smaller groups taking on new challenges or simply meeting for a coffee morning etc.

This is the link to our new Facebook group

https://www.facebook.com/groups/249548413723294/?ref=share

**The Picture to the Right shows some of the Tuesday Club at a recent Bowling event.**

# ❖ VIEW Craft ❖

Registered Charity No. 1110290

Hello

I would like to tell you a little about VIEW Craft which we set up nearly twenty years ago. We are a small independent voluntary organisation which runs a weekly art and craft group for blind and partially sighted people living in the Eastbourne and Wealden district.

We meet on Tuesday mornings during term times at Herstmonceux Village Hall from 10.00 to 12.00. We run several craft groups, including macramé, mosaics, woodcarving, painting and cane work, which are taught by experienced tutors.

The members make a small weekly contribution (currently £5) towards the cost of the craft materials. Transport is free and is provided by volunteer drivers some of whom also help with the activities. There is a very friendly atmosphere with plenty of help and support.

Since returning after the lifting of covid restrictions our membership is sadly reduced, so we would welcome some more members. If we can increase our membership we shall also need more voluntary drivers/ helpers. The drivers receive a mileage allowance of 45p.

We would be pleased to welcome you if you would like to come along one Tuesday to see us working to see whether you would be interested in joining us. We also offer a free 'taster morning' so you can try one of two of the crafts to see if there is something suitable for you.

If you would like more information or would like to arrange a visit please contact me.

Jean Wilson, Tel. No. 01323 505764 or

Email jean.dolmeg@outlook.com

**www.viewcraft.org**

# A simple recipe from one of our Members

My name is Bill and I enjoy cooking.  Since losing my sight, I have had to adapt my culinary skills accordingly. Here are some hints and tips and a simple recipe.

For those of you who like freshly baked bread, and who doesn't, and have not got the patience to wait 4 hours to taste it, soda bread is perfect. It takes only a few minutes to mix the ingredients and 25 minutes to bake.

**Ingredients**

1lb, 450 grams of plain flour

1 plain yogurt 500grms.

1 heaped teaspoon bicarb of soda

1 level teaspoon salt.

**Preparation**

Check you have your shelf in the middle of the oven.

Turn your oven up to 220c, fan 200, or 450f.

Oil a baking tray, I use a spray.  Sprinkle flour on a chopping board.

Don't forget your oven gloves.

Place your mixing bowl on a non-slip mat. Use the biggest bowl you can to avoid spillage.

**The image below shows Bill's soda bread, cut open with a knife on a cooling rack**

**Method**

Put all the dry ingredients in a bowl and mix well using a spatula.

Add the yogurt a spoonful at a time and mix until the dough comes away from the sides and you have a soft ball.

Turn out onto your floured board and kneed for a minute.

Shape into a ball and flatten slightly.

Cut a deep cross with a pallet knife into the top.

Slide onto your oiled baking tray.

Place on the middle shelf of the oven and bake for 25 minutes.

After 25 minutes take out the tray and stick a knife in the centre of the loaf, if the knife comes out clean the bread is cooked. If not place back in the oven for a further 2 minutes. Repeat the process until the knife is clean.

Remove the bread from the tray and place back on the floured board.

Place the hot tray back in the oven.

The bread will be hard and hot so be careful.

Take a clean tea towel, dampen it under the tap with warm water, squeeze it out and wrap it around the loaf.

This will soften the crust. Leave it for 10 minutes to soften.

Just enough time to make a coffee. It keeps a few days and is great toasted. Enjoy.

East Sussex
**Vision Support**

I wish to make a voluntary donation of **£**……..……which is enclosed. (Please make cheques payable to **ESVS**)

If you wish to pay by Standing Order we will send you a 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 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 East Sussex Vision Support

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:**

**Telephone number:**

**Email address:**

Please notify us if you want to cancel this declaration, Change your name or home address or no longer pay sufficient tax on your income/ and/or capital gains

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