



Bury Society For Blind and
Partially Sighted People

Monthly V.I. Link – Issue 15

January 2021

I'm sure, despite the current lockdown situation, we are all feeling more positive about 2021 compared with 2020! It's not often so many people agree about one thing, 2020 was not our best year! Finally, there appears to be a light at the end of the tunnel with the roll out of the vaccine. Let's look forward to the summer when hopefully we can start at least some of our activities again.

In the meantime, it is very important to shield yourself as case numbers are so high currently. The following advice is with thanks to Age UK Bury and Carrie Dearden, Communications & Engagement Manager, NHS Bury Clinical Commissioning Group.

Coronavirus information and advice

Lockdown Rules

You **must not** leave or be outside of your home except when it is necessary.

You **may** leave the home to:

- Shop for basic necessities, for you or a vulnerable person.
- Go to work, or provide voluntary or charitable services, if you cannot reasonably do so from home.
- Exercise with your household (or support bubble) or one other person. This should be limited to once per day, and you should not travel outside your local area.
- Meet your support bubble or childcare bubble where necessary, but only if you are legally permitted to form one.
- Seek medical assistance or avoid injury, illness or risk of harm.
- Attend education or childcare – for those eligible.

If you do leave home for a permitted reason, **you should always stay local** in the village, town or part of the city where you live. You may leave your local area for a legally permitted reason, such as for work.

If you are clinically extremely vulnerable, you should only go out for medical appointments, exercise or if it is essential. You should not attend work.

Remember to stay 2 metres apart from anyone not in your household.

Community Hubs - Bury Council's Community Hubs support clinically extremely vulnerable people to ensure they have the support they need, such as help with food shopping and collecting prescriptions. Call 0161 253 5353.

Vaccination programme – Bury's fourth community vaccination centre opens this week. The vaccinations, offered by invitation only, are initially being given to priority groups identified by scientists and the Government as those who will benefit most. Residents who are eligible for a vaccination will be contacted by their GP Practice when it is their turn, people are asked not to contact their GP Practice about the vaccine before then.

Scams Calls – There are a number of scam calls being made offering at home vaccines. Please do be aware that you will only be contacted by your GP or a member of the Health Service for your vaccination. You will not be asked to give your address or, more importantly, payment.

Getting tested – If you have symptoms, find all the information you need on booking a test at: www.bury.gov.uk/coronavirus-testing

We're here to Help.

Whilst our Centre is closed, our Staff Team are still here for you during lockdown. Services are by pre-arranged appointment only, fully compliant with government safety guidelines. If you are struggling with a sight issue, or are worried or need assistance, give us a call – we are always happy to help.

You may recall we mentioned last year about making businesses aware of your visual impairment. We've listed below a few of the suggestions again as a refresher. In addition to the high viz jackets and lanyards we have available, there is also the sunflower lanyard which is a 'hidden disability lanyard'. The lanyard, which is entirely voluntary for people with hidden disabilities and their families/carers, acts as a discreet sign for staff that additional support or help may be required. You can purchase the lanyard from the Hidden Disabilities web site. If you need further information or help in accessing any of the above, then do give us a call on 0161 763 7014.

- If you have been issued with a symbol cane or long cane, please do use it, especially when out in areas such as supermarkets, banks, medical appointments, using public transport etc.
- Should you feel you need a refresher cane training, or would like to be considered for long cane training, please contact us at the Society for advice / information and the referral process.
- We have a selection high viz waistcoats, lanyards and 'Assistance Required' cards, to help you take control of your social distancing.
- Be prepared! If food shopping, ring ahead and establish what support is available and if there are allocated times to shop.

Farewell to a Friend.

Many of you will know one of our long-standing members, Thelma Jolly. Thelma passed away peacefully just before Christmas. Over the years, Thelma has attended the monthly socials, craft group, Knit & Natter and the Thursday Over 60's and will be missed by many.

A story to share: Whilst Christmas now seems ages away, we were so moved when we heard about one of our clients helping out a friend at Christmas. The couple were interviewed on Radio Manchester when they heard about the kind gesture.

Peter Wilkins sadly lost his wife earlier this year. He had decided to go and spend Christmas with friends in Essex. However, with the introduction of the Tier 4 restrictions this was not possible and so he was facing a lonely Christmas. Fortunately, his friend Tarnia Canham decided she was not going to let him be alone on Christmas day. Following a conversation with her Care Company who willingly agreed to cater for both of them at no extra charge, Tarnia invited Peter, who lives in Stockport, to join her for Christmas lunch in Prestwich. Both Tarnia and Peter are registered severely sight impaired but this didn't stand in their way and a good time was had by all.

New Year – New Challenges!

Whilst it's tough at the moment, it is a New Year and traditionally we look at trying something fresh and new. You might be struggling for ideas so here's a few we've come up with. Why not give them a try?

Back to School! You may have heard that the schools have closed during this lockdown period. Why not take advantage of the wonderful programmes available on BBC2 for secondary school students and have a listen in? Every weekday after 1pm. Looking at the programme for today (Wed 13/1), Bitesize Daily for Secondary Students, it's science week and they are focusing on chemistry and a look at the life of Marie Curie. Then at 2pm Brian Cox explores Jupiter. Each day is different – why not take a look?

Equally, there's some wonderful programmes on Radio 4. From Monday 18th January, why not start your day with Woman's Hour at 10am (it's not just for women!), and then it's episode 1 of 'Lamentation' by C J Sansom. This book has been adapted by Colin MacDonald and if you like history and a good old detective story and murder, I can thoroughly recommend it! At 4.30pm there's the Infinite Monkey Cage, a light bantering approach to science, 6.30pm David Mitchell's panel game 'The Unbelievable Truth' where comedians try to smuggle truths past their opponents and then finish the day at 8.30pm with Crossing Continents a series focusing on foreign affair issues. What's great about Radio 4 is that many of these programmes are repeated so you can choose what time of day suits you.

Keeping active:

Why not take up a new hobby or activity? Our rehab team are currently working with volunteers to develop various activity packs including Crafts at Home, Cookery and Writing. If you are interested in any of these packs, please give us a call and we can establish the best individual pack for you.

Are you interested in Drama? Engage2Stage are holding online sessions. If you are interested contact Anthony via e mail at engage2stage@email.com

Our Monthly Virtual Sessions are expanding!

The Macular Support group meet on Wednesday 20th January at 1.30pm via telephone conference call and a number of our other groups are now moving to this. If you are currently in a group, your group leader or a member of staff will be contacting over the next couple of weeks to see if you would like to join.

Monthly Healthy Living Session – Thursday 21st January at 10.30am. For log on details please ring the Society on 0161 763 7014.

Monthly Access Forum: We also have a new group being launched next month. Highlighting the challenges of access and obstructions in the community has always been problematic for people with sight loss. This subject was raised at the last Macular Support group by a number of members. In light of this, Kelly Marno, from our Early Intervention Team, who leads on our Access issues, is forming a 'Monthly Access Forum' where such issues can be voiced and Kelly will bring these to the attention of relevant organisations for answers. Kelly is also looking at inviting representatives to attend these meetings for your voice to be heard directly. If you would like to be involved in this group, then call Kelly on 0161 763 7014 for more details.

Volunteers: Oh, how we've missed you all! It was so nice to see at least a few of you on our Virtual Christmas Zoom Coffee morning. We're going to make this a regular monthly session, starting 10.30am Friday 12 February and thereafter the second Friday of every month. It's a great opportunity to catch up and for us to let you know about online training available and new volunteer roles emerging. Let Diane know if you wish to attend. Remember you can access via a phone line, you don't have to have internet.

RNIB Support for mental wellbeing. RNIB's Sight Loss Advice Service has worked with MIND to offer free emergency mental health sessions over the phone by BACP-registered counsellors with sight loss experience, to give emotional support during these difficult times.

In an hour-long session with a counsellor, you will have space to share feelings, explore coping strategies and any further support needs. The sessions are on offer until June 2021. If you are struggling with your mental well-being and would benefit from support, you can register directly for a one-off session by completing RNIB's referral form on their web site. Alternatively, contact us and we will complete the referral form with you.

Still Crafty!! Thank you to all who supported our Christmas Catalogue – we really enjoyed promoting our 'crafty volunteers'! In fact, so much so we are continuing to make facemasks, handmade personalised cards, and rainbow lighted bottles. Prices range from £2 upwards. Call the office for further information or if you wish to order anything.

Monthly Prize Draw – '100 Club'. Our January lucky winners were No.221, £105.30, No.92, £52.65 and No.84 £17.55. Thank you to all the people who

have joined us recently. It's a great way to support the Society. 50% of the money raised is distributed in prizes and the other half contributes directly to provide services for local people living with sight loss. The draw takes place on the second Friday of every month, and to buy a number it costs just £1.00! Let us know if you would like an application pack.

Just for Fun – Brainteaser. First, I am dried, then I am wet. The longer I swim, the more taste you get. What am I?

'Take 5' Quiz. Answers from last month:

1. How many ghosts appear in *A Christmas Carol*? **4**
2. In what year was the first Christmas card sent? **1843, by Sir Henry Cole.**
3. In which modern-day country was St Nicholas born? **Turkey**
4. What gifts did the three wise men bring for the baby Jesus? **Gold, Frankincense and Myrrh**
5. Who invented the Christmas Cracker? **Tom Smith in 1847**

'Take 5' Quiz.

1. Which is the third largest of the Channel Islands?
2. How many sides has a 20-pence piece?
3. In which Puccini opera does Mimi appear?
4. What do the numbers add up to on the opposite sides of a dice?
5. In the zodiac, which animal is linked with Capricorn?

A final message to all who have not been so well or are now on the road to recovery, including Sarah Webster, Linda Gibbons, Sandra Harrison, Carol Wilding, Lorna Elmore and Steph Garvey. We are thinking of you all and hope you are feeling better soon.

As we come to the end of this month's bulletin, we would just like to say how amazing you all are! Many of our Phone Friends report back how positive you are keeping despite missing friends, family and activities. Stay safe everyone. Remember, wash hands, wear your mask and keep your distance and we will all be together very soon.

Jill and all the Bury Blind Society Team.

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