



Bury Society For Blind and  
Partially Sighted People

## Monthly V.I. Link – Issue 16

### February 2021

As we go to press, I am delighted to inform you that all our Early Intervention Team have received their first vaccine. From phone calls, we gather that many of you have also received your first dose, so we certainly appear to be making headway here in Bury. I think we can all accept that this year will still not be a 'normal year' but there will be a gradual relaxing of restrictions and we want to make sure we are with you every step of the way. We've put together a programme of social and practical activities that can be accessed initially virtually or via the telephone and then ultimately back in the Centre. Do give us feedback on areas of interest you would like us to develop and also, join in! If you are unsure of how to join these groups, just give us a call and we can talk you through it. In many cases, you do not need to have the internet.

Obviously currently Bury is still in lockdown so do follow the Government Guidelines and stay safe. The following advice is with thanks to our monthly NHS Bury CCG contributor, Carrie Dearden.

#### **Coronavirus information and advice**

Whilst we are still in lockdown, please remember only leave your home to:

- shop for necessities, for you or a vulnerable person.
- exercise once a day, only with someone from your household or one other person and you should not travel outside your local area
- seek medical assistance, medical appointments etc.

**COVID vaccination rollout:** The majority of people aged 70+ and clinically extremely vulnerable people have now either had their first jab or have an appointment booked. Vaccinations are given to people in the priority order set by the Government and people will be contacted when it's their turn. For more information visit: [www.bury.gov.uk/coronavirus-vaccine](http://www.bury.gov.uk/coronavirus-vaccine)

**Getting tested:** If you have any of the three most common symptoms of coronavirus - a high temperature, a new continuous cough, or a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste - please get tested to protect yourself and the people around you. For the latest information about testing and availability visit: [www.bury.gov.uk/coronavirus-testing](http://www.bury.gov.uk/coronavirus-testing) or call 0161 253 5515.

**Support in the community:** Support for clinically extremely vulnerable residents who have been asked to shield, other vulnerable residents and those who need to self-isolate continues through Bury's Community Hubs. The hubs can help with food shopping and collecting prescriptions as well as telephone befriending. Call 0161 253 5353 (Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm).

Many of the main supermarkets, Tesco, Sainsburys and Asda are offering priority slots for those shielding or vulnerable plus some of the smaller grocery shops are providing a delivery service. It's worth contacting your local store for details.

One of our volunteers, Carol, wanted to highlight a store as particularly helpful. Morrison's offer a telephone ordering service for people identified by Community Champions as elderly or vulnerable providing essential items. If you think that you, a relative or a friend, would benefit from this service, contact your local Morrison's and speak to their Community Champion.

However, this week Morrison's definitely won a Gold Star! Whilst placing her order, our volunteer Carol was asked if she would like to treat herself to an Afternoon Tea for just £5.00! Why not? Carol was delighted when the Afternoon Tea arrived, safely packaged on a plastic platter with a dome seal. The tea included a selection of fresh sandwiches, pork pie, scone, small jar of jam and butter, tub of cream, delicious slice of chocolate gateaux and a tea bag! What a treat and delivered to her door! Well done Morrison's!

Do you know any other suppliers who are providing something a little different? Let us know and we will pass it on.

### **Mental health support**

Bury's Getting Help Line is a confidential telephone service run by the voluntary sector for people of all ages who are experiencing difficulties with their mental wellbeing. For advice, guidance and signposting to local services

call the Getting Help Line on 0161 464 3679, find out about other support at: [www.bury.gov.uk/mentalwellbeing](http://www.bury.gov.uk/mentalwellbeing)

### **Back by popular demand!**

As many of us are not managing to get out at the moment, we've brought back our simple exercises to do in the home. Remember, if at any point you feel unwell, stop and seek medical advice (dial 111) if you continue feeling unwell.

### **These gentle sitting exercises can be done at home and will help improve your mobility and prevent falls.**

Do not worry if you have not done much exercise for a while, these seated exercises are gentle and easy to follow. Choose a solid, stable chair that does not have wheels. You should be able to sit with your feet flat on the floor and knees bent at right angles. Avoid chairs with arms, as these will restrict your movement. Wear loose, comfortable clothing and keep some water handy. Build up slowly and aim to do this exercise at least twice a week.

### **Hip Marching**

This exercise will strengthen hips and thighs and improve flexibility.

- Sit upright and do not lean on the back of the chair. Hold on to the sides of the chair.
- Lift your left leg with your knee bent as far as is comfortable. Place your foot down with control.
- Repeat with the opposite leg.
- Do 5 lifts with each leg.

**National Census:** The census is coming on Sunday 21 March 2021.

By taking part, you can help to inform decisions on services that shape your community, such as healthcare, education, and transport.

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) will send you a letter in the post with an access code and instructions. If you, or anyone you know, needs help, a wide range of support services are available. Services include help over the phone, in a web chat or on social media, a paper version of the questionnaire if you prefer, accessible census guidance, for example, in braille. For more information, visit [www.census.gov.uk](http://www.census.gov.uk) or call us.

## **Electric Nightmare!**

Whilst we applaud the introduction of electric vehicles from an environmental point of view, it poses a real threat to people with sight loss. With petrol or diesel engines, vehicles can be heard clearly. However, without a sound emitter fitted, apart from the sound of the tyres on the road, an electric vehicle is virtually silent. So please, if you know anyone who drives an electric vehicle, remind them to switch on their sound emitter. After all, you wouldn't drive at night without your lights on, it's the same thing.

## **My Access To Work Experience – Gill Currie**

Access to Work (ATW) is a scheme where anyone working with a disability can apply for assistance for extra help with equipment, travel to and from work or a support worker to assist where appropriate. My past experiences in applying for ATW have been more than challenging, with assessors not being familiar with my disability and the relevant specialist equipment. However, due to the current situation with COVID, my needs to carry out my job efficiently have changed significantly, as work days are split between the office and home. With the support of my employer (Bury Blind Society!) I decided to re-apply for additional support.

What a difference! This time the experience was almost enjoyable! I was assessed over the phone due to COVID, but the assessor was competent and had a good understanding of sight loss. They were approachable and even suggested technology that I hadn't thought of to support me in my current role. From assessment to award took less than two weeks! I would encourage anyone who is in employment to consider applying for ATW, especially if your disability needs have changed and you do need extra support to complete your role in a timely manner.

Please be mindful to speak to your Employer before making enquiries/ claim for ATW. Your Employer may be expected to contribute towards your claim, especially if you are working for a large organisation. Also, you might be expected to contribute towards the costs as well as your Employer.

## **We're here to Help.**

Our Early Intervention Support and Phone Friends services are still available whilst the Centre is closed. If you are struggling with a sight issue, or are worried or need assistance, give us a call – we are always happy to help.

## Thoughts

Our thoughts are with the family and friends of Val Powell who sadly passed away earlier this month. Val was a volunteer with our Thursday Afternoon Group.

We are sending best wishes to Philip Levine, Margaret Clare, Jean Stanway Joan Grimshaw and Sheila Southgate who are recovering from various health issues. We would also like to issue a warning to Steve to stop doing sky dives as it will result in broken bones!! Best wishes Steve!

## Valentine's Day – 14<sup>th</sup> February:

Well, we may not be able to meet up with loved ones this Valentines, but we can treat ourselves to this simple Valentine 'indulgence' – and it can be part of your five a day too! All you need are some strawberries and a bar of dark chocolate.

**Step 1:** Cut a strip of baking parchment and leave to one side. Melt the chocolate in 20 second blasts in the microwave, stirring after each blast until melted. Put the melted chocolate in a small deep bowl.

**Step 2:** Gently hold the strawberries by the leafy top and dip into the chocolate. Tap off any excess chocolate and put on the parchment to set. If you have any leftover chocolate, pour it onto another strip of parchment and leave it to set, it can be used again.

**Step 3:** Eat and enjoy!

## Coming Up!

As mentioned last month, several activities are 'going live' over the next couple of months. We are still developing other groups and if you have any ideas then please, do give us a call. There is quite a lively programme coming together. So far it looks like this:

### Monthly:

**Third Wednesday: 17<sup>th</sup> February 1.30pm: The monthly Macular Support Group.** This group is accessed by a land or mobile telephone line. All welcome.

**Third Thursday: 18<sup>th</sup> February 10.30am: Healthy Living:** Why not join this friendly group to review favourite recipes, learn hints and tips on how to prepare safely and even do a few exercises whilst you talk! Access is via Zoom or phone line. Last month they were all going to make a healthy, warming soup, so we look forward to having a report in our next edition!

**Last Friday: 26<sup>th</sup> February 1pm: Access Forum.** A new group providing a forum to voice concerns ranging from support in Supermarkets to uneven pavements and overhanging foliage, led by our Early Intervention Officer, Kelly Marno. Through her work Kelly has developed links with transport, the Council and other official bodies to highlight issues for people living with sight loss.

**Second Friday: 9<sup>th</sup> March 10.30am: Virtual Volunteers Coffee Morning.** Di is welcoming volunteers to this monthly event. It's an opportunity to catch up on what has been happening both at the Society and with each other. Each month there will a short talk from other organisations working with Bury Blind Society to update on their activities too. Accessible by Zoom – internet or phone line.

**New: Monthly Makes! Every second Wednesday at 2pm. Starting 10<sup>th</sup> March.** Join in some fun, simple craft ideas via Zoom and phone line. Activity packs are sent out prior to the session so booking is essential.

**Monthly Conversation:** We have received suggestions of a monthly interest talk. So far, we have had offers of talks on the Manchester Ship Canal, the history of Nursey Rhymes and Gardening tips for Spring. Let us know if this is something that would be of interest. You can join virtually via Zoom, phonenumber or we can record on a USB for listening individually.

For further details of how to join any of these sessions, just ring the centre and speak to a member of staff. 0161 763 7014.

**1922-2022 – One Hundred Years of Bury Society for Blind & Partially Sighted People.**

Next year is our Centenary year so we are looking to you to come up with ideas to celebrate such a wonderful occasion. A Big Party must be one on the

list but there are other thoughts too. One idea has been for individuals to knit 100 squares, to form 100 blankets to donate to a homeless charity. If this is something of interest to you, let us know, as we can provide wool, knitting needles and other equipment as necessary. We have also been approached about forming a history group to research Bury in 1922! Or maybe you have a tale to tell of how Bury has changed over the last 100 years, or how attitudes have changed (or not!) for people living with sight loss. A year seems a long time to prepare, but just look how quickly 2020 went – so we need your help!

### **Annual Quiz Friday 26 February 2021, 7.30pm:**

Traditionally, this month we would be holding our annual Quiz at Elton Liberal Club. Thanks to the pandemic, we cannot do this in the usual manner but fear not, Carl, our usual Quiz Master, has passed the gauntlet on to a 'Virtual Quiz Master' Michael this year! We are delighted that one of our own volunteers has agreed to put together a Virtual Quiz for us to be held on Friday 26<sup>th</sup> February.

As this is our first 'fundraising virtual event' we are keeping it simple. Just contact us if you wish to attend and we can pass on the relevant signing in details. We are asking if you can make a small donation to support this event, either via our Website or by post. If you would prefer to have a paper or audio recording of the questions after the 26<sup>th</sup> again, for a small donation, we would be happy to forward this on. Please do encourage family and friends to support this event. Don't forget, the big advantage, it's all in the comfort of your own home! You can play individually or in 'social bubble' teams. Full instructions will be given on how to access the quiz and record your answers.

Looking to the future, if this is successful, we are planning a 'Give Us a Clue' panel game, Gardeners Question Time, plus many more. Please do support us!

**Monthly Prize Draw – '100 Club'**. Our February lucky winners are: No.293 £107.70, No.91, £53.85 and No.134, £17.95. 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. To buy a number it costs just £1.00! Let us know if you would like an application pack.

## Just for Fun – Give your mind a workout with this month’s brainteaser.

Answers first! January’s brainteaser was: First, I am dried, then I am wet. The longer I swim, the more taste you get. What am I? **Tea.**

### **February’s Brain teaser:**

What is unusual about the following words: revive, banana, grammar, voodoo, assess, potato, dresser, uneven?

### ‘Take 5’ Quiz. Answers from last month:

1. Which is the third largest of the Channel Islands? **Alderney – the first two major islands are Jersey and Guernsey. They make up 99% of the population and 92% of the area.**
2. How many sides has a 20-pence piece? **Seven**
3. In which Puccini opera does Mimi appear? **La Boheme**
4. What do the numbers add up to on the opposite sides of a dice? **Seven**
5. In the zodiac, which animal is linked with Capricorn? **Goat**

### **This month’s Quiz questions:**

1. In What year was the first PlayStation console release?
2. What is the strongest sense in humans?
3. How old do you have to be to stand for US President?
4. What percentage of the human body is water?
5. How many world titles has Phil Taylor won in darts?

I will leave you with the final part of a quote I read recently, which I thought rather apt.

“keep your head high, keep your chin up, and most importantly, keep smiling, because life's a beautiful thing and there's so much to smile about.”

- **Marilyn Monroe.**

Stay safe everyone, keep washing those hands, wear your mask, keep your distance and we will all be together very soon.

**Jill and all the Bury Blind Society Team.**