



Sandwell Visually Impaired Newsletter Issue 10 Winter 2008 – 2009

Welcome to our winter newsletter
We wish all our readers a very happy New Year

Keeping well, keeping healthy



SVI have obtained a grant from the Smethwick and Oldbury Commissioning Alliance (part of the local health service) to hold a well-being and health awareness day. It will be on Monday 16 March at the Dorothy Parkes Centre, Smethwick.

We will be inviting all visually impaired Sandwell people, with guides if needed. The event will include general health checks and useful information. Travel costs can be met and a healthy lunch will be provided.

Importantly, the event also enables us to share information

and reach out to the visually impaired community in Sandwell, especially those who are not registered but are living with sight loss.

It's an excellent opportunity to inform people of how we can assist them.

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SVI aims to make living and/or working in Sandwell better for people coping with sight loss.



The event will be our spring 'open member meeting; it will be informative, with fun as well as learning. We're all heart; let's keep it healthy and beating at the right rate! Invitations will follow shortly.

For more information speak to Sandra on 0121 601 0637.

Blind Dave's progress

SVI local hero "Blind Dave" is to be Sandwell Council's champion for getting fit and active.

Multi-marathon runner Dave has teamed up with Sandwell's national award winning Triple S programme (Start up, Shape up, Sign up) as Physical Activity Champion, in a bid to raise awareness of the importance of staying fit and healthy.

Dave said: "When I was approached to work on the programme, I jumped at the chance. As I've been involved with the Triple S programme for the past couple of years, I know about the excellent work that's already been achieved".

Sandwell Council's cabinet member for culture and leisure,

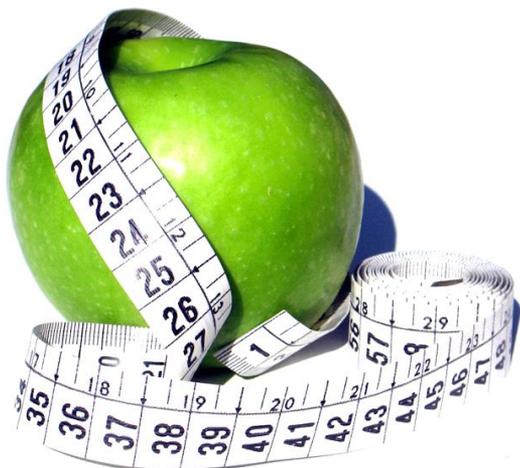
Cllr Linda Horton, said: "I couldn't think of a better ambassador to help us encourage more physical activity. Dave will be focusing his efforts on encouraging people to do five 30 minute sessions of exercise each week".

To keep well and healthy isn't rocket science; even taking a 10 minute walk a day does wonders for you. Add to that coping with your daily chores with a little gardening thrown in and you'll be on the right road.

Dave is joining us at our health event on 16 March. He's sure to have plenty of tips to help keep us on our toes! He's looking forward to meeting you and so are we.



Slimwell shapes us up!



Made possible with generous funding by the PCT, 17 members of SVI and SAIBA found the 12 afternoon sessions run by Slimwell, learning about eating and cooking well, to be very enjoyable. So much so that many are keen to keep their new found friendships alive by joining similar groups organised by Agewell, with transport help from Ring and Ride.

Continuing with our keeping well and healthy theme, the evening sessions started on 12 January at the Dorothy Parkes Centre, Smethwick, with 22 members signed up for what have proven to be jolly sessions. But they've been warned; the scales will not go missing this time!

More info from Val on 0121 588 2150. There may be a slot for more members for these sessions in future.

A storytelling feast by Giles Abbott

Giles Abbott, an inspired, blind storyteller, read to a full house at Thimblemill library in October.

"I have never been to a storytelling event before. This was excellent, it takes a certain skill to keep audience attention. I really enjoyed this and would come again," said one satisfied customer, speaking for all who attended.

Following on from the success of the MP3 player launch, Sandwell Libraries promoted the event as part of the Year of Reading; for people coping with sight loss.

It was great; more please! And the library staff were wonderful too.



You can find out more about Giles on his website:
www.gilesabbott.com

Housing matters

Are you coping with housing difficulties like meeting rental or repair costs, or needing essential modifications? Then help is to hand. Action for Blind People has teamed up with SVI to look at the housing needs of visually impaired residents of Sandwell.

Whether you own or rent your home, we hope you'll spare a few minutes to call Action for Blind people on 0121 200 3930 to complete a brief questionnaire. They'll then be able to seek help for you from the council to meet your needs. It's a great opportunity to seek help; good advice and fortune could well be at the other end of the line!



Another successful forum

Our fourth annual forum in October was a great success again, with about 120 delegates enjoying themselves.

The event was opened by the Mayor, Cllr Robert Price and the interesting speakers included;

- 'Blind' Dave Heeley who took us through his heroic 777 marathon exploits; the first disabled person in the world to have achieved this goal. He's a great SVI member role model.
- Saeed Nasser, a founder member of SVI, who inspired us with his moving account of how the family ethos of not allowing sight loss to dictate outcomes has enabled Saeed to jump the hurdles and become the council's Arabic interpreter.

We also said hello to Clive Horsley who was elected to our management committee. Clive has thrown himself into his supporting role as Assistant Secretary and proof reader of documents. His sighted help is much appreciated. Welcome Clive.

Thanks for your support; it's much valued as are the glowing compliments we have received. We're listening and learning to ensure another great day at next year's forum.



Pictured above; Blind Dave and Graham take questions at the forum.

Extant theatre presents.....

'Efining and Blinding', an exciting interactive Cabaret of fun songs and sketches; performed by five blind professional actors. It's great value at only £5.00 a seat.

SAIBA and Black Country Touring have teamed up to bring this cracking show to Sandwell. It promises to be a lot of fun; though it's not suitable for under 14 year olds.

It's good for us to laugh so let's join up and bring the house down!

Date; 20 February 2009; starts at 8 pm;

Venue; Crosswells Inn, Crosswells Road, Langley, Oldbury. B69 4SB.

More info and seats booked at tickets@saiba.org; or tickets from the Wagon and Horses pub, Oldbury or from Stuart on 0121 429 8104.





Friendship over the phone

Like to meet new people, but can't get out as much as you would like? Why not try a Tele-Befriending group?

The award-winning RNIB weekly telephone social groups are open to all adults with sight loss. There's no cost to join these friendly and informal groups and there are no telephone charges as they call you.

To join a group or to find out more, contact the RNIB Talk and Support Team on 020 7874 1303 or email talkandsupport@rnib.org.uk



Louis Braille bi-centenary

Louis Braille was born 200 years ago on 4 January 1809.

To mark the achievements of this remarkable man, celebrations across the globe are planned in 2009. The BBC World Service honoured him on 4 January.

David Blunkett, the patron for the year's celebrations, will spearhead the RNIB event in March. There's a need to encourage more adults to learn Braille as it's a life-changer!

We'll keep you posted if anything's planned around here. More info at braille@rnib.org.uk

Handy email

If you have one, please let us have your current email address. From time to time we get valuable information that we want to share with you more quickly than the quarterly newsletter allows. It costs less money and uses less time for us to send this by email. So it's the most efficient way for us to 'spread the word'.

The enclosed membership form has a space for you to print your email address.

Electrical recycling comes full circle

Electrical goods with recycled content will soon be available on the high street. Indesit has become the first company to successfully incorporate recycled parts derived from white goods on a large scale. The project delivers substantial savings in raw materials and costs.

To read the full story go to:

www.wrap.org.uk/wrap_corporate/news/wrap_funded_project.html



SMOKEFREE

Ready to kick the habit?

Why not make 2009 the year you give up smoking or persuade a friend to do so? Sandwell have a dedicated service offering you help to achieve this aim.

Since April 2008 they've helped 943 Sandwell people to kick the habit; they know it's not easy but they're experts at making the route as comfortable as possible for you.

Once achieved the benefits are great; better health; a more active longer life; and more money in your pocket.

The Stop Smoking team will be at our Well-being day on 16 March offering help and advice.

If you want to get started before then they can be contacted on Free phone 0800 073 1388; or Text READY to 80800 or visit the website at;

www.stopsmokingsandwell.co.uk



Briefings round-up

Stop press

It's great to be still growing. The summer newsletter attracted more members; now standing at 430. That's near 30% of the 1,400 people registered with sight loss in Sandwell. Thanks for your support. We've a lot to offer so SVI would welcome more members. Your support enables us to seek a better service.

Membership

Have any of your contact details changed since becoming a member of SVI; or have you not yet joined us? If you're not sure and you would like to join SVI please fill in the enclosed membership form and return it in the self addressed envelope. Please include the envelope in which you received this newsletter. This will allow us to be sure who is returning the forms. If you need help to complete the form, please phone Bernard on 0121 525 2119.

SVI membership card

Would you welcome an SVI membership card? It would serve to remind you of your SVI

membership. Let us know what you think by ticking the spot on the membership form enclosed or phoning Bernard on 0121 525 2119.

Feedback please

Are we meeting your needs? The editor would love to hear from you. Contact details below. Or pop your suggestions or questions in the enclosed envelope.

This issue – thanks to:

The editorial team, Sandwell MBC Adult and Community Services, SPIN and Reach Project Printing, Tipton.

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CCTV viewer for sale

It's a Magnalink Penguin model; colour with auto focus when required with a facility for changing the colours and variable enlargement.

Costing £1,300 two years ago, John seeks offers around £700.

Contact him on 01922 44 2442.

