

DEAFBLIND SCOTLAND

NEWSLETTER WINTER 2020



Scottish Charity SC031167

IN THIS ISSUE

DEAFBLIND SCOTLAND NEWS

- **NEW** Your Voice, Your Rights
 - Christmas Activities
 - Touching Lives 2
 - Accessible Technology Project
 - Online Activities
 - Zoom Classes Online
-

FUNDRAISING

- Christmas Appeal
 - Yaldi Lottery
-

NEWS

- Coronavirus in Scotland
- Energy Support During Winter
- Room for Art Exhibition
- British Blind Sports Online
- Deaf Action Advice Line
- Sight Scotland Veterans
- BBC Red Button Service
- Matchbox Cineclub

WELCOME

Welcome to the Winter edition of the Deafblind Scotland Newsletter. Everyone at Deafblind Scotland wants to extend our festive best wishes to you all. We know this will be a Christmas that is a bit different but as you will see as you read through the newsletter we will be doing everything we can to make it as festive a period as we can for you. Our thoughts are with all our members in this particularly isolating time but with hopeful news of a vaccine on the horizon we hope that we will be able to welcome you back to the Centre soon into the New Year or to support you to attend your usual activities in your communities. Meantime as ever I would encourage you to be in contact with us if you are feeling lonely or have questions about the restrictions arising out of Covid-19. You most certainly are not alone - we are at the end of the phone or an email. We hope you can join in some of the festive fun we have planned online and if you are struggling to get online but want support to do so please let us know and we will see what we can do. Have a good festive period and please join us if you can in our festive campaign to 'Keep the Spirit of Christmas Alive'.

Stay safe and well, festive best wishes
Isabella Goldie CEO and Deafblind Scotland Staff and Trustees.

YOUR VOICE, YOUR RIGHTS

The SAGOD Organising Group have helped to create a new section in your newsletter. This will be a place to find out what's going on in Scotland. Here, you can share your voice, your views and your experiences to help shape Scotland's laws, services and wider communities.

Social Care Review

Deafblind Scotland gathered the views of deafblind people for two national consultations, the Social Care Inquiry and the Mobilisation of Health Care. We put together feedback from online discussions with deafblind people as well as one to one sessions. Staff and volunteers also took part. We hope our involvement will lead to a greater understanding of deafblind people's needs and gives the Scottish Government greater awareness of deafblindness when creating future, plans for Social Care and Health Care. We were successful in putting forward sensory impairment as a priority for the Social Care Winter Plan to ensure that deafblind people get adequate support during this challenging winter period.

BSL Act 5 Year Anniversary

Deafblind Scotland helped to run a successful online BSL showcase event with partners NDCS, BDA and Deaf Action to mark the 5th Anniversary of the ground-

breaking BSL (Scotland) Act 2015. NDCS hosted this event and feedback from participants was very positive with regard, to increased understanding of deafblindness and communication support needs and challenges accessing this.

We are delighted to have worked with Public Health Scotland (PHS), and to see PHS prioritise the public health needs and health improvement needs of Deafblind people. They have launched new resources on the 5th anniversary of the BSL (Scotland) Act 2015. You can find these on their website: <http://www.healthscotland.scot/publications>

PHS have also created online health advice for BSL users, including information on COVID-19, available on the BSL pages of NHS Inform:

<https://www.nhsinform.scot/translations/languages/british-sign-language-bsl>

Further information on the BSL Health Improvement plan in BSL is available here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DUKJZExIWvE>

TOUCHING LIVES 2 PROJECT

Who remembers the Touching Lives project?

Deafblind Scotland have been awarded funding to deliver Touching Lives Take 2 project to raise awareness of deafblindness across communities.

This will run in Fife and East Dunbartonshire and there will be opportunities for you to get involved.

We will be sending you more details soon.

Below is a picture of the deafblind members and partners at our first video call Steering Group meeting.



ACCESSIBLE TECHNOLOGY PROJECT

Accessible technology has been important for everyone during this time to make sure we are still connected to information, friends and family.

The Opening Up Technology project is here to help with your technology needs.

Please get in touch with Gillian if you want Deafblind Scotland to:

- Apply for grants to get accessible technology, equipment or software
- Provide support to get the right equipment for you
- Help you to purchase equipment on-line
- Provide basic technology training through the digital café or a home visits if required
- Offer advice and support on what equipment is available
- Provide guidance and support on internet safety
- Help you to apply to Scottish Broadband Voucher Scheme for support to get broadband in your home

All members can borrow from the DbS Technology Library.

Recently, Deafblind Scotland member Frenchie took part in an online art project with Dame Evelyn Glennie. Dame Evelyn is a famous percussionist who is also deaf, she performs around the world.

Below is a picture of Frenchie, Dame Evelyn, and project workers on a video call.



During these difficult times the online world has been a great place to see people working together to find new ways to socialise and learn new skills. Deafblind Scotland is here to help you if you would like to try something new, or if you need help getting and learning to use new accessible technology.

ONLINE ACTIVITIES

We are all missing you at our weekly activities. Even though we cannot meet at our Development centre we still want to connect with you all to offer activities and classes you can do at home.

A few of our members have been working hard to film classes that you can log into on the DBS YouTube channel. Each activity has three classes for you to try and BSL interpretation and subtitles.

If you want to give it a go but don't have the technology or simply need someone to help you participate at home, please get in touch with Gillian to make sure you can join-in.

- **General Knowledge Quiz with Ian**
- **Craft Classes with Crafty Andy**
- **Art Project with Arty Anne**
- **Gentle exercise and stretching with Alison** – get in touch with Gillian for the password for this class

You can log-into the classes on the Deafblind Scotland YouTube channel and click on playlists to see the on-line activities:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCaXkbn5t0p9kd0UibHOfpjQ>

ZOOM ONLINE CLASSES

We also have weekly Zoom classes that some of our members have already been having fun with. Please contact Gillian for log in details. If you require any support or technology to join a class, please get in touch with Gillian.

Creative Writing Classes – Wednesday mornings
10.45am – 11.45pm

BINGO - Friday afternoons 2pm – 3pm

Contact Gillian for the Zoom meeting ID and Password:
development@dbscotland.org.uk

FUNDRAISING

CHRISTMAS APPEAL



DEAFBLIND SCOTLAND

A wellbeing phone call for a Deafblind person



Christmas shopping with a Guide Communicator



Keep the Spirit of Christmas Alive

Keeping the Spirit of Christmas Alive

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, restrictions mean we can no longer meet in groups; we can't play music at events and we can't sing together. So this year, Deafblind Scotland intends to brighten everyone's festive season through our campaign 'Keeping the Spirit of Christmas Alive'.

One of the activities in our campaign will show people how to sign a Christmas song, Jingle Bells. How fun is that! So we are asking companies, community groups and schools to sign up and help raise funds for Deafblind Scotland so all deafblind people can look forward to a better Christmas and services across the year. Our message to those that are raising funds for us is that there is no better way to keep the spirit of Christmas alive than to show that you care about others living more isolated lives.

Our fundraising pack with lots of fun ideas is available on our website www.dbscotland.org.uk or we can mail a copy to you if you know of anyone who would like to raise funds for us or join the Christmas Sign-a-long. Please follow our social media pages @dbscotland and keep an eye on our website for further details.

YALDI LOTTERY

You can now support Deafblind Scotland by playing the new Glasgow Community Lottery, Yaldi. Tickets are just £1.00 per week, with a jackpot of £25,000.

You've got to be in it to win it, so sign up here now, <https://www.glasgowlottery.scot/support/deafblind-scotland>



NEWS

CORONAVIRUS IN SCOTLAND

The whole of Scotland must continue to follow these guidelines.

Each area in Scotland has been allocated a COVID protection level. There are 5 protection levels. Check the level your local area is in on the Scottish

Government website: www.gov.scot/check-local-covid-level. If you are unsure please contact DbS for advice.

In addition, everyone should:

- wear a face covering
- avoid crowded places
- clean hands and surfaces regularly
- stay 2m away from other people
- self-isolate and book a test if you have COVID-19 symptoms (new continuous cough, fever or loss of, or change in, sense of smell or taste)

Self-isolate. Stop the Spread.

Need to self-isolate? Do so immediately. Self-isolating is how we stop the spread. If you need help, support is available.

To book a test please contact **08000 282816** or www.nhsinform.scot

Deafblind Scotland Here to Help

You can continue to contact Deafblind Scotland for support and advice.

Phone: **0141 777 7774**

Text: **07715 421 377**

Email: **info@dbscotland.org.uk**

ENERGY SUPPORT DURING WINTER

If you were born on or before 5 October 1954 you could get between £100 and £300 to help you pay your heating bills. This is known as a 'Winter Fuel Payment'.

You usually get a Winter Fuel Payment automatically if you are eligible and you get the State Pension or another social security benefit. If you're eligible but do not get paid automatically, you will need to make a claim. You can claim Winter Fuel Payment by phone or by post.

Telephone: 0800 731 0160, textphone: 0800 731 0176 or download the form online.

Another energy scheme is the Warm Home Discount. This is a one-off £140 discount on your electricity bill, between September and March. You need to contact your energy supplier directly to apply for this.

If you're worried about your bills, or if your home is cold and difficult to heat, Scottish Government's nationwide energy efficiency scheme Warmer Homes Scotland can provide things like: Wall insulation, Loft insulation, Draught-proofing, Central heating and Home renewables systems. Home Energy Scotland are able to assist you – you can contact them on 0808 808 2282.

Helen or Riley would be happy to help you with energy queries or any other welfare rights issue. Please contact them on 0141 777 5835 or WR@dbscotland.org.uk.

ROOM FOR ART EXHIBITION

Deafblind Scotland member Anne Dignan has been involved in creating some of the artwork for the ROOM FOR ART online exhibition. The exhibition aims to bring artists together during these challenging times and to encourage others, especially those who were shielding, to continue creating.

You can view the online exhibition here:

<https://roomforart.squarespace.com/>



Picture of Portobello Beach in pastels, by Anne Dignan

BRITISH BLIND SPORTS

British Blind Sports have launched a new programme called 'Active At Home'. To get involved, you can sign up to their mailing list at bit.ly/BBSMailingList or join their Facebook group "British Blind Sport: Active at Home" by visiting bit.ly/BBSWorkoutAtHome

The Active at Home Programme includes Strength and Tone Class, HIIT Class, Yoga, Boxercise and Pilates.

For more information, please contact BBS Participation Officer, David, on david@britishblindsport.org.uk or phone 01926 424247

DEAF ACTION ADVICE LINE

Deaf Action have been working in partnership with deafPLUS to launch **The Advice Line** for Scotland and Northern Ireland.

The Advice Line is a free to use service for anyone who is deaf to get advice on a range of topics from a trained advisor who is a native BSL & ISL user.

These topics include:

- General advice: explaining services, correspondence and forms
- Welfare/ Benefits

- Housing
- Debt and Money advice
- Employment, Education and Training
- Health and Social Care/Independent Living

This is an online service where you have a face to face chat with the advisor. You can use Skype, Facetime or Zoom, whatever is best for you. To book an appointment visit deafplus.info/book-an-appointment

More information here: www.deafaction.org/advice-line-launches-in-scotland-and-n-ireland

SIGHT SCOTLAND VETERANS

Scottish War Blinded has rebranded to **Sight Scotland Veterans (SSV)**. They support veterans who have a visual impairment which affects their daily living.

SSV provide an outreach service and have two specially built activity centres. Seventeen outreach workers cover the whole of Scotland offering support, advice, equipment and signposting. The SSV member has a named worker for life and can contact them anytime. Each member is also offered opportunities for social interaction (within pandemic guidelines) and a financial gift at Christmas time.

You can read more on their new website:
sightscotland.org.uk/veterans

BBC RED BUTTON SERVICE

Earlier in the year we told you about the campaign to keep the BBC Red Button Service. They had planned to remove the service due to financial pressure.

Good News! The BBC has reversed its decision to bring an end to its Red Button TV text services. Following a campaign on behalf of people with disabilities, older people and those without online access.

Read more here: www.bbc.co.uk/news/entertainment-arts-54360998

MATCHBOX CINECLUB

Matchbox Cineclub is the winner of the Culture, Arts & Film National Lottery Award 2020

Since 2010, Matchbox Cineclub (Sean Welsh and Megan Mitchell) have been providing films and pop-up cinemas across Scotland.

Since March 2020, they have captioned over 250 films to ensure that D/deaf audiences can still enjoy the world of film through lockdown.

They have also been sharing their skills with others to help them understand all the ways they can make sure their online activity is as accessible as possible.

Visit their website for more information:

matchboxcineclub.com

We wanted to end by asking you to join us in extending our thanks and appreciation to Lorna McIntyre BSL Tutor and previous Guide Communicator who will be leaving us in January whilst continuing to teach BSL at college. Lorna extends this message to members 'I would like to say that I have thoroughly enjoyed working alongside you over the many years I have been working for the organisation both in my capacity as a Guide Communicator and as a BSL Tutor, and wish you all the very best for the future.

We would also like to share some sad news with you. Last week we learned of the sad passing of Sharon Brophy who many of you may know worked with Deafblind Scotland for several years as a Guide Communicator. I am sure those who were supported by Sharon will remember her fondly as during her time with us she supported deafblind people with great dedication and always enjoyed having a good laugh with people she worked with. We hope you will join us in extending our sympathy to Sharon's family and remembering her for all the wonderful work that she did as part of the DbS family.

We hope that you will join us in the weeks to come in Keeping the Spirit of Christmas Alive and please do tell us

if we can do more to help make your festival period more peaceful and joyful.

We hope you enjoyed this newsletter and we value your views and support. If you have any suggestions for future newsletters, please get in touch with us.

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