

# **EAST SUFFOLK ASSOCIATION FOR THE BLIND**

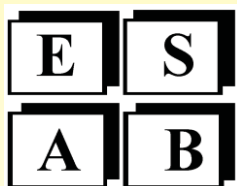
## **NEWSLETTER**

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**EAST SUFFOLK ASSOCIATION FOR THE  
BLIND**

**Registered Charity No. 206886**

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## **CHAIRMANS MESSAGE**

This year the day to day challenges on the organisation continued unabated, as always raising the funds required to continue delivering a valued and relevant service to all our members has proved hard. These days there are many more charities both national and local reaching out for funds and it becomes ever more difficult to stand out and gain financial support. We also face the same competition when it comes to attracting volunteers; you may be able to help with both these challenges?

Financial security; one of the most effective ways of contributing to the future of our organisation is by leaving a gift or legacy to ESAB in your will. In some cases there may even be a tax advantage to your estate if you do make a charitable bequest! Often there is no need to have a completely new will written to put this in place, a simple codicil may suffice; your solicitor or will writer will be able to advise. If you are in a position to help and you've enjoyed or benefited from ESAB's services then could I please ask that you think about making provision in some way to enable the continuance of our good work? Later on in this newsletter there is an article of the current Inheritance Tax regulations.

Volunteers; On behalf of all our members I'd like to take this opportunity to thank everybody who pulls together to make ESAB the caring and supportive organisation it is, including those who run the District Committees, those who help run the Socials, those who help out with transport, those who help raise funds and of course those who are Trustees for the Association. Without the combined efforts of this amazing group of people our members would undoubtedly live less satisfying lives. If anyone reading or listening to this newsletter has family or friends that may be able to help out for a few hours each month, then could I ask that you or they to contact the office or your Community Worker to offer their help? We will then arrange to explain what's involved and make any introductions needed.

I'd also like to take this opportunity to express thanks on behalf of the Trustees to the officers and employees of the Association; their individual and collective effort, commitment and dedication is also vitally important in making ESAB the success it is.

Finally as 2017 draws to a close, may I take this opportunity to wish you all the warmest of seasonal greetings along with health and happiness for the coming year.

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### **LARGE PRINT 2018 CALENDARS**

We again this year have a limited number of large print wall calendars available for our members. There is a small space for each day in which to write a reminder. There is no fixed charge for these although we would appreciate a donation of £3 or more where that is possible. To order your calendar please ring the office on 01473 611011.

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### **HOME VISITING MAGNIFIER SERVICE**

All three East Suffolk Blind home visiting Community Workers are now trained in assessing members' individual magnification needs, from the simple hand-held through to the more sophisticated electronic hand-held types. They are each equipped with an extensive range of demonstration equipment which can be used to find the most appropriate one to meet an individual's needs and circumstances. Once an appropriate choice has been made, the Community Workers can arrange for the purchase of the magnifier and once delivered, they are able to help with training to ensure they are used correctly.

It should be noted that the NHS Hospital eye clinics have low vision aids clinic of their own which all members can request to be referred to for a similar service.

It is important to note that before you seek to obtain any magnifier, you should first be certain that you have had a recent eye test and that you are using glasses that were prescribed from that eye test. To arrange for a home visit by one of our Community Workers, please call the office on **01473 611011** to make an appointment.

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### **WOULD YOUR FAMILY OR CARERS LIKE TO RECEIVE ESAB NEWSLETTERS AND OTHER INFORMATION?**

At the moment the East Suffolk Blind sends out its bi-annual newsletter such as this one and other leaflets promoting upcoming local product exhibitions and events for the visually impaired to all



of its members including yourself whose details we hold on our secure database at our head office (but only if they have not opted out of receiving information). If your family or carer would like to receive this material from us as well as or instead of yourself, please could you ask them to call our office on 01473 611011 to provide the appropriate contact details which will be stored securely and in line with current data protection legislation; none of this information will be shared with any individual or organisation outside ESAB without the express consent of the person concerned. Whilst we are happy to send out material to families and carers in print we would encourage use of email wherever possible.

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### **ALDEBURGH FISHING MATCH 2017**

On Sunday the 15<sup>th</sup> October, the 71<sup>st</sup> Aldeburgh Angling Club beach fishing match was held in aid of ESAB. This long standing event was again this year organised by Gail and Paul Harrison ably assisted by family members. The turnout was very good with 112 anglers taking part including 2 ladies and 8 juniors. Weather was excellent for mid-October with lots of folk strolling along the promenade, although not so good for fishing as catches were fairly small! The Mayor of Aldeburgh Mrs J Bond kindly attended to present the prizes for the fishing match and raffles. Over the 70 years this event has been running ESAB has benefitted to the amount of £41,263, a great result which we are very grateful for. If you're planning a day out in Aldeburgh next year the 2018 event is planned for the 21<sup>st</sup> October. It would be great to see you there. Steve Hodgkiss – ESAB Chairman.

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### **EAST ANGLIAN SAILING TRUST COMING OF AGE**

The East Anglian Sailing Trust (EAST) grew out of an informal initiative in 1993 between the former RYA Seamanship Foundation, now RYA Sailability, Bill Smith of the East Anglian Sea School (EASS) and Michael Spear of Suffolk Yacht Harbour (SYH) to provide an annual east coast cruise for visually impaired sailors. This has been developed each year since then to also include weekend taster events involving a team of over twenty locally based volunteer yacht owners.

In 1996 Kevin Curtis, a sailing gold medal winner at the Atlanta Paralympic Games was sailing a National Squib keelboat at Haven Ports Yacht Club and he persuaded Michael and Bill to extend the blind sailing activities to include other disabilities. This led to EAST being established as a separate charity, with a keelboat section, to provide regular weekly sailing opportunities for adults with a wider range of disabilities, and a visual impairment section to provide sailing on yachts. The Trust became a registered charity based at Suffolk Yacht Harbour. It provides people with disabilities and their helpers with the opportunity to enjoy regular sailing in a safe environment using specialist equipment where necessary. Over the next years five Squib keelboats were acquired and, in 2001, HRH The Princess Royal opened EAST's first dedicated training room.

Since then the fleet has been built up to twelve keelboats and two support boats. These are used to run disabled sailing evenings at least twice weekly, most weekends and some days for groups from April to September. EAST participates in the Royal Yachting Association "Push the Boat Out" week to help attract new sailors. The Visual Impairment section continues to provide two taster weekends and a week-long cruise on yachts each year.

In 2009 with the help from Suffolk County Council's Activities Unlimited programme the Trust started regular sailing sessions for children with disabilities. In 2012, in partnership with the Suffolk Wildlife Trust they started a Discoverers Project for young people with learning difficulties from local schools. These Discoverers sail and also investigate the flora and fauna in Levington Creek and on the River Orwell.

EAST hosted the UK National Blind Sailing Championships in 2009, 2010, 2011 and 2012.

By the middle of 2010 it was becoming apparent that EAST had outgrown its premises and they negotiated a lease on the building next door which is over double the size. With the help of a £50,000 grant from the National Lotteries Peoples' Millions programme, this has now been converted into the EAST Waterside Community Centre with dedicated accessible changing rooms as well as a training room and boat maintenance facilities. They were delighted to welcome two special visitors in 2011. In April Griff Rhys Jones agreed to officially open the new EAST Waterside Community

Centre. This included a day of entertainment and activities plus an auction with Griff as the auctioneer which raised a considerable sum for EAST. The Princess Royal honoured EAST with a return visit in September 2011; after a tour of the new centre she named the latest Squib to the fleet 'East Ashore'. This boat is used for land based training.

EAST is now an RYA Sailability Centre of Excellence, an RYA Recognised Training Centre and a Royal Yacht Association OnBoard Centre.

EAST volunteers have a passion for sailing and also a passion for assisting their disabled sailors to enjoy that experience. EAST has no paid staff and relies on its team of volunteers. The continuing support from local sailing clubs, their members, as well as funding from local and national sources is greatly appreciated.

If you are interested in finding out more or would like to go sailing with EAST, please call them on 03330 883278 or go onto their web site at [www.e-a-s-t.org.uk](http://www.e-a-s-t.org.uk) for information as well as to send them an email if you wish to.

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## **VOTING IMPROVEMENTS FOR VISUALLY IMPAIRED PEOPLE**

The results are now in for the RNIB's latest voting report, which is based on their survey of blind and partially sighted voters after the 2017 General Election and they are not good. Only one in four blind and partially sighted voters across the UK said that the current system lets them vote independently and in secret. The research shows unacceptable barriers to exercising your democratic right to vote still exist for people with sight loss. As a result the RNIB are calling for three significant changes to the current system:

1. To replace the current tactile voting device with a new accessible voting system that guarantees blind and partially sighted voters can be in sole control of the secrecy of their vote.
2. Eradicate the current blocks in the system, so blind and partially sighted people can vote without assistance and in secret.
3. Provide an online and/or telephone option for blind and partially sighted people to cast their vote by the 2022 General Election.

The Government made a recent announcement that Local Authorities can now use Certificate of Vision Impairment records for individuals to improve their access to support when voting. This is a really important step forward for blind and partially sighted voters. Enabling local authorities to send accessible voting information directly to blind and partially sighted people will make a huge difference.

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## **VOCAL EYES**

If you haven't heard about VocalEyes, here's a brief introduction. Founded in 1998, they are a national charity that is committed to creating the best opportunities for blind and partially sighted people to experience and enjoy arts and culture. They provide audio description at over 100 theatres, museums, galleries and heritage sites across the UK every year. They are the largest provider of live audio description in the UK, and receive funding from Arts Council England.

They are keen to make sure that blind and partially sighted people around the UK are aware of audio-described theatre performances or museum tours, and encourage them to attend. Three times a year they publish in clear print, braille and audio CD formats a free newsletter with listings of audio described events and performances and monthly they send out an email newsletter with selected highlights.

Please see their web site, at [www.vocaleyes.co.uk](http://www.vocaleyes.co.uk) which includes information not only about events and performances audio described by VocalEyes, but many others at museums and theatres across the UK. You can also sign up to their newsletters and other regular publications. They can be contacted by phone at 020 7375 1043 or via email at [enquiries@vocaleyes.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@vocaleyes.co.uk).

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## **TOUR OF THE HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT**

UK residents who are blind or partially sighted can arrange a fully guided tactile tour of the Houses of Parliament. The tour is specifically designed for those with little or no sight, the difference being that they allow you to touch almost everything.

In order to develop a real sense of the building and its history, visitors have the opportunity to talk to their friendly team before the tours start and touch various specially made models and other objects. The tours then follow a route covering Westminster Hall, Central Lobby, the Lords Chamber in the House of Lords and the Commons Chamber in the House of Commons. There are plenty of objects and items of furniture to explore along the tour route.

These tactile tours are offered free of charge. Tours run between ten to twelve times per year, usually late on a Friday afternoon, and last approximately two hours. Visitors are recommended to arrive one hour prior to the start of the tour to allow time to explore the tactile objects in Westminster Hall and to visit their facilities before the start of the tour.

For booking and further information please contact them by email at [visitparliament@parliament.uk](mailto:visitparliament@parliament.uk) or by calling 02072192144.

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## **BE MY EYES APP FOR SMARTPHONES**

In the last newsletter there was an article describing a new smartphone App called “Be My Eyes” which allows blind users to request help through their smartphone from a sighted person on their smartphone anywhere across the world. As soon as the first sighted user accepts the request for help a live audio-video connection will be set up between the two and the sighted user can tell the blind person what he or she sees when the blind user points his or her phone at something using the rear-facing camera.

At the time of the last newsletter this App was only available on Apple devices but since October 5<sup>th</sup> 2017 it is now supported on Android devices and is available from Google’s Play Store.

You can find out more by visiting the Be My Eyes website at <http://bemyeyes.com/>.

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## **RNIB TOP TIPS GUIDES**

A series of six top tip guides have been developed for carers, families and supporters of people with sight loss, as well as those with dementia and sight loss.



There are nearly a million people in the UK suffering with dementia, and with the prevalence of age-related blindness it's important there's dedicated support for people affected by both.

Each of the six guides listed below are made up of ten bullet-points.

- Ten tips to help you communicate with a person with sight loss
- Ten tips to help identify sight loss
- Ten tips to guiding a person with sight loss
- Ten top tips to help a person with sight loss in their home
- Ten tips to help you communicate with a person with dementia and sight loss
- Ten tips to help a person with dementia and sight loss in the home

All of these guides can be downloaded from the RNIB web site at **[rnib.org.uk/toptipcards](http://rnib.org.uk/toptipcards)**

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## **NEW £10 NOTE TACTILE FEATURE**

On the front of the new polymer £10 note (the side with raised print), there are two clusters of raised dots in the top left hand corner. This tactile feature helps blind and partially sighted people identify the value of the note.

The polymer £20 will also have a tactile feature, but with a different pattern. The polymer £5 will be identifiable as the only polymer note without a tactile feature.

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## **GET YOUR TAX RIGHT WITH THE RNIB TAX ADVICE SERVICE**

RNIB has a small team of friendly advisers who offer help and support to people with sight loss with issues related to income tax, tax credits, VAT relief and other HMRC issues.

They can check if you are eligible for extra tax allowances that can reduce your tax bill or be transferred to your partner to reduce their tax and they can help you to claim these easily over the phone. Examples of this are the Blind Person's Allowance and the Marriage Allowance. These extra tax allowances are not paid automatically - so make sure you claim them to ensure you're not paying too much tax.

Perhaps you need help with completing a tax form or to register as self-employed. You may want to check if you're eligible for Tax Credits, inform Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) about a change in your circumstances, check your tax code is correct or receive correspondence from HMRC in an alternative format.

RNIB works with HMRC's Extra Support Service, where a team of specially trained advisers can offer a more personalised service to help vulnerable individuals manage their tax and benefit affairs.

You do not have to wait until there is a problem to get in touch – indeed, advising HMRC early could prevent problems arising.

Call RNIB's Tax Advice Service on **0345 330 4897** Monday to Friday, 8.45am to 5pm or email [tax@rnib.org.uk](mailto:tax@rnib.org.uk)

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## **INHERITANCE TAX**

When someone dies, if the value of the estate including your home exceeds £325,000, the amount above this threshold (known as the nil-rate band) is normally subject to inheritance tax at 40%. While most estates don't have to pay it, rising property prices and a frozen threshold have seen an increasing number becoming eligible. But there's plenty you can do to legitimately reduce your IHT liability. Here are some of the key rules to follow.

- Married couples can combine their allowances. Assets left to your spouse or civil partner are free from IHT and won't count towards the £325,000 threshold. If the first spouse dies without using all of their allowance, the unused percentage can be transferred to the surviving spouse. So, in cases where the deceased spouse doesn't use any of their IHT allowance, the surviving spouse's allowance will effectively double, meaning they will be able to pass on a total of £650,000 tax free.
- Extra allowance for property. If you are leaving your main home to children or grandchildren or other descendants, you can pass on an extra £100,000 tax free. This allowance, known as the main residence nil-rate band, will rise by £25,000 each tax year until April 2020. At the current limit, couples leaving their home to direct descendants will be able to leave a

total of £850,000 without paying any IHT. From April 2020, a couple could leave a home worth up to £1million tax free.

- Pensions can be passed on tax free. If you die before 75, any defined contribution pensions you hold will not be included as part of your estate, meaning they can be passed on tax free. Your spouse or children will be able to spend the money freely, providing they receive it from the pension company within two years. If you die after turning 75, defined contribution pensions won't be liable for IHT, but the beneficiary may need to pay income tax on the money. The rate they will pay will depend on their earnings for the year. Annuities and final salary pensions cannot be passed on in this way.
- Gifts can cut your tax bill. You can make gifts worth up to £3,000 each tax year without the money ever being subject to IHT. Smaller gifts up to £250 can also be made to as many people as you like, but not to the recipient of the main £3,000 allowance. Wedding presents are tax free too; up to £5,000 for children, £2,500 for grand-children and £1,000 for anyone else. These limits are all per person, so couples can give away twice as much. Any money you leave to charity is all IHT free, and if you donate more than 10% of your taxable estate, the IHT rate payable by your heirs will be reduced from 40% to 36%.

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## **FUNDRAISING PREFERENCE SERVICE (FPS)**

This is a service for members of the public to control the nature and frequency of direct marketing approaches that they receive, including fundraising communications. You can choose to stop email, telephone, addressed post, and/or text messages from a selected charity. It allows you to choose to stop any or all types of direct marketing so you can tailor the way a charity communicates with you according to your preference.

In the first instance, you are encouraged to contact the charity directly to stop unwanted communications. Failing that you may wish to use the Fundraising Preference Service when:

- Direct communication between the donor and charity has become difficult or has broken down;

- Communications from charities are becoming stressful and uncomfortable;
- There is a need to efficiently deal with communications from multiple charitable organisations;
- There is a lack of clarity over how to stop communications from a particular charity;
- Uncertainty exists about whether consent to receive communications has been given or needs to be removed.

FPS requests are submitted via their website at [www.fundraisingpreference.org.uk](http://www.fundraisingpreference.org.uk). They also have a phone helpline service at 0300 3033 517 if you do not have access to a computer or you need help to complete the online form.

The easiest way to find the charity is to use their registered charity number which will be displayed on all of their promotional material. If you cannot find the charity number, you can also search using the charity's name.

You will be asked by FPS to provide your name and relevant contact information so that you can be matched to the charity's records and the communication can be stopped. All personal information entered into the FPS website will be secure and confidential. You will receive a reference code for the request.

Once all details have been provided and the request submitted, the FPS will send an automatic email to the charity with a 28 day deadline to remove your details from direct marketing lists.

If you receive another direct marketing communication from a selected charity more than 28 days after submitting an FPS request, you can let the FPS know by revisiting their website using your reference code. A further message will be sent to the charity clearly highlighting that you have continued to receive communications.

If you still continue to receive communications and you wish to make a complaint, you can then contact the Fundraising Regulator using the Fundraising Regulator's Complaints form.



## **LIGHT UP YOUR LIFE**

For people with macular conditions, lighting is the starting point for improving their ability to read, write and make the most of their vision. When looking to improve lighting, you need to consider lumens rather than wattage. Wattage represents the power required to produce the light, whereas lumens represents the total light produced by the bulb. With more energy-efficient light sources available today, equally bright (measured in lumens) lights are now much lower in wattage. For example, a traditional 60 watt incandescent bulb generates approximately 700 lumens, whereas a fluorescent tube needs 12 watts and an LED only 10 watts to produce the same amount of light.

With task lighting, bringing the light closer to the object increases the intensity of the light. For example, halving the distance between the lamp and the newspaper quadruples the amount of light on the newspaper. Bringing the light closer in front and below eye level is less likely to cause glare, making the object brighter and improving contrast. Avoiding light coming over your shoulder means the light has to travel less distance to get to the object. If you are using a magnifier as well, a light over your shoulder is more likely to cause reflections in the lens and cast shadows on the page.

Fluorescent and LED options for lighting are more energy-efficient, last longer and produce less heat than traditional incandescent and halogen lights. LED lights also reach maximum brightness instantly whereas energy-saving bulbs take a while to reach full brightness.

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## **EXPLORING THE AMAZON ECHO**

Voice command technology where items respond to your voice is opening up a whole new world for blind and partially sighted people. The idea of a voice assistant is that you can ask it questions or tell it what to do in a natural way and it will respond intelligently. Two technical products which seem to be making waves in this space are the Amazon Echo and its smaller sibling, the Amazon Dot.

Amazon Echo is a ten inch tall cylinder – think an oversized can of Pringles! It has a Bluetooth speaker with clear, loud sound. The top section contains seven 'always listening' microphones, a manual activate button (with tactile dot) and a mute microphone button. It has no headphone jack.

Amazon Dot has all the same voice command technology as the Echo. It is much smaller; it's essentially the top section of the Echo. It has no Bluetooth speaker, but it does have a headphone jack to connect to existing audio or Bluetooth speaker. It has a small built-in speaker, similar to that on a smartphone or tablet.

To use either of these you will need to have an internet connection and to get them operational you then need to download the “Alexa” app onto your tablet, smartphone or laptop computer and follow some simple set-up steps. Once setup, the Echo or Dot will always be listening for the 'wake word' which activates the device. You can choose the wake-up word but by default it's “Alexa”. You will then be connected to “Alexa” which is a cloud-based voice service which acts as a virtual assistant. By talking to it in a natural way you can ask it to play music or an audio book from your chosen library, set alarms and timers, ask general knowledge questions, check your calendar, weather, traffic and sports scores, manage to-do and shopping lists, control compatible smart home devices such as lighting, heating and more. You can even add different news sources to create a daily custom news presentation or tell Alexa to play any radio station.

The Echo can pick up your voice from a reasonable distance away even when it is playing music so you don't have to raise your voice and it has an excellent loudspeaker. The Dot is good value for money and can do everything the Echo can do and it's great on a bedside table or added to an existing audio setup.

Amazon Echo, priced at £150 and Amazon Dot priced at £49 are both available from [www.amazon.co.uk](http://www.amazon.co.uk)

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## **GARDENING TIPS**

Here are a few tips that may help those with a visual impairment who would like to continue enjoy gardening:

- Paint the edges of steps and handrails in a contrasting colour and have different textured edging for paths.
- Light steps and pathways and keep overhanging greenery cut back.
- Hang a wind chime to identify a particular spot.

- Set large pebbles in areas where it is dangerous to walk, for example under casement windows.
- Use cane toppers to protect your eyes.
- Keep track of tools by marking them with bright colours and carry them in a white bucket.
- A short length of old guttering makes an ideal seed bed. Fill with compost and sow seeds. When transplanting, slide the compost with seedlings straight into a shallow trench.
- Knotted string can be used to mark the distance between planting seedlings, or use a grid of square plastic netting.
- Sow into peat pots or egg boxes which can be planted out directly into the soil.

There is a UK charity called **Thrive** who use gardening to bring about positive changes in the lives of people living with disabilities or ill health or who are isolated, disadvantaged or vulnerable. They have written “Getting on with Gardening” guides which are essential guides to gardening with a visual impairment. They are packed with tried-and-tested techniques, gathered from their many years of work with visually impaired gardeners, and have a foreword by Pippa Greenwood, garden designer and journalist. Volume 1 has information on seed sowing, potting, gardening outside, tools and equipment, raised beds, preparing the ground, planting and watering. Volume 2 expands the gardener’s knowledge with sections on taking cuttings, container growing, more gardening outside, protected growing, pruning, the lawn, pests and diseases and labelling. Both volumes have large clear diagrams in print or tactile versions, and a wealth of tips from gardeners including ideas from the winners of the Blind Gardener of the Year competitions. In addition they have other publications titled “Getting on with growing food” and “Getting on with growing in containers”.

To order copies, visit their online shop at **thrive.org.uk** or call them on **0118 988 5688**. Alternatively you can write to them at: Thrive, The Geoffrey Udall Centre, Beech Hill, Reading, RG7 2AT

## **SUSPECT A STROKE? ACT FAST. CALL 999.**

The Face, Arm, Speech, Time (F-A-S-T) test can help you recognize the symptoms of a stroke

**F for Facial weakness** – Can the person smile? Has their mouth or eye dropped?

**A for Arm weakness** – Can the person raise both arms?

**S for Speech problems** – Can the person speak clearly and understand what you say?

**T for Time** – to call 999

### **What are the symptoms of a stroke?**

- Sudden weakness or numbness of the face, arm or leg on one side of the body.
- Sudden difficulty speaking or understanding spoken language
- Sudden loss or blurring of vision in one or both sides
- Sudden confusion
- Dizziness, unsteadiness or a sudden fall, especially with any of the other signs
- Sudden severe headache with no apparent cause

### **Why act FAST?**

Stroke is a medical emergency. By calling 999, you can help someone reach hospital quickly and receive the early treatment they need. Prompt action can prevent further damage to the brain and help someone make a full recovery. Delay can result in death or long-term disabilities such as paralysis, memory loss and communications problems. Ambulance crews use FAST and can act fast with hospital staff to identify a stroke quickly. If you see any one of these symptoms it could be a stroke so act FAST

### **What is a stroke?**

A stroke is a brain attack. It happens when the blood supply to the brain is disrupted. Most strokes occur when a blood clot blocks the flow of blood to the brain. Some strokes are caused by bleeding in or around the brain from a burst blood vessel.

### **What is a TIA (transient ischaemic attack)?**

A TIA (also known as a mini-stroke) is the same as a stroke, except that the symptoms last for a short amount of time and no longer than 24 hours. Don't ignore it. It could be a warning sign of a serious stroke. It should be treated as an emergency by calling 999



immediately. Prompt action means that urgent steps can be taken to reduce your risk of having a stroke. If you think you might have had a TIA in the past and have not spoken to your GP, contact them as soon as possible.

### **Facts about stroke**

Strokes are devastating. There are around 152,000 strokes each year in the UK; one in five is fatal within a year. Strokes are also the leading cause of complex disability. Half of all stroke survivors are left with a disability, and over a third who survive are left dependent on others for everyday activities like dressing, shopping or even making a cup of tea.

### **Stroke Association**

We believe that strokes can and should be prevented. It's why the Stroke Association funds research to develop new treatments and ways to prevent strokes. It's why they raise awareness and give people the information they need to reduce their risk of having a stroke. They would rather no one had a stroke at all, but if they do, they're with them every step of the way to make the best recovery they can.

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## **A PASSPORT TO SMOOTHER AND EASIER CARE**

People living with a disability or long-term health condition are being encouraged to sign up to 'About Me' which is a health passport that can be used to share information with health and care professionals involved in their care. It is an easy to use document which is completed and owned by the person receiving care. It is to help anyone with a disability and/or health condition provide healthcare professionals with information about themselves in an easy-to-understand way that reduces the need to keep repeating it. You can use this for hospital and GP appointments, with carers, dentists, opticians and many others as well as when you go away on holiday.

The 'About Me' initiative has been co-produced with disabled people, their family, carers and representatives of disability and NHS organisations in Suffolk and is supported by all NHS organisations in Suffolk. The need for its development was identified at the annual disability focus events held to provide

opportunities for disabled people to make their needs known to those providing care services for them.

Linda Hoggarth, Chair of the Suffolk Disability & Health Action Group, said "Health passports for people with learning disabilities have been available for some time. People with other disabilities wanted to have the same opportunity to provide information about themselves in a simple format. They get very tired of having to tell 'their story' over and over again when in hospital or when they access other health services. We are very pleased to have successfully developed 'About Me' for use by any disabled person. It is important that health professionals read and take note of 'About Me' to help them provide a better understanding of the needs of their disabled patients."

The passport can be downloaded from the following web site and can then be completed either on a computer or printed off and filled in by pen: <http://midsuffolkaxis.onesuffolk.net/news/about-me>

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## **TALKING MEDICATION REMINDER ALARM WATCHES AND CLOCKS**

A company called Verbalise have introduced an excellent new Talking Medication Reminder in the form of a keychain. If you or someone you know has a lot of medication to take regularly throughout the day we know this can be a difficult everyday task to remember to do, so why not try this Medication Reminder with 5 daily alarms; set the alarms for each time you need to take medication throughout the day and then when the alarm goes off you know it is time to take your medication. This will make a sometimes difficult task much simpler.

Not only will this keychain remind you when to take your medication but it will also announce the time to you in either a male 24-hour or female 12-hour voice (both included with keychain). The time is controlled by the atomic clock in the UK and USA so will always be accurate and change automatically throughout the year for British Summer Time. If you live or are travelling to another part of the world then the time can be set automatically.

Included with the keychain, which comes with battery fitted, is a karabiner and lanyard.

For more information or to purchase their products, please call the Talking Watch Shop on 0345 00 40 100 or go to their web site at [www.talkingwatchshop.co.uk](http://www.talkingwatchshop.co.uk)

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## **EAST SUFFOLK BLIND DISTRICT COMMITTEE NEWS**

### **FELIXSTOWE BRANCH**

Looking back on 2017, the Felixstowe Branch has had a varied and successful year. We continue to have monthly socials. In June, our members enjoyed a day at The Hut on Felixstowe seafront. How we managed to choose one of the sunniest days of the year, I'll never know!

Mark Maidment, our vice chairman, was awarded a Mayor's Community Service Award in April in recognition of his many years of work with the visually impaired. Mark, along with his wife Lisa work tirelessly for ESAB and we are so pleased that their dedication has been recognised.



The picture above shows all those in Felixstowe who were chosen to receive awards from the last outgoing Mayor, Jan Garfield. Congratulations to Mark Maidment, shown standing in the front row to the left of the Mayor, who was awarded a Felixstowe Community Award for his work with the East Suffolk Association for the Blind and running the Felixstowe Blind Shooting Club.

Our Branch has been very fortunate this year to benefit from the proceeds from a concert performed by Felixstowe Harmonies as well as the Fun Run organised by the Felixstowe Rotary Club. Our Committee is keen to raise awareness of the charity and to do this we have participated in a Health Fair, had a street collection with fundraising stalls and participated in the Salvation Army Christmas Tree Festival.

Our loyal band of volunteers and drivers must be thanked for giving their time, as without their help, we would not be able to continue with our activities. **Jane Fox (Secretary)**

### **BLIND VETERANS UK VISIT FOR ANNUAL SHOOT COMPETITION**

In July a group from Blind Veterans UK came from Brighton to Felixstowe to participate in the annual sound shooting competition against the Felixstowe team. The day before the competition a garden party was hosted by the committee to entertain their guests. Luckily the weather was fine so the BBQ provided was a great success.

Awards were presented by a volunteer from the Felixstowe Rifle Club, the hosts of the competition.

Engraved glass tankards were given to Sue Norman (Felixstowe) in 1st place, Hannah Gordon (Felixstowe) in 2nd place & John (Blind Veterans UK) in 3rd place.

The picture to the right shows the Perpetual Shield being presented to the Felixstowe team. (left to right Hannah Gordon, Lisa Newson and Sue Norman.)



### **THAMES BARGE TRIP ON THE RIVER ORWELL JULY 2017**

Rosemary Green wishes to say a huge thank you for such a lovely day out on the Thames Barge trip on the River Orwell. In every way a truly wonderful day from being picked up at the start to the return home after such a lovely time. The cups of coffee, tea and snacks along with a lovely lunch of crust-less handmade tasty sandwiches and to finish a hot fish & chips delivered on arrival back at Ipswich!



To have been on Thistle was a lovely time with lots of information by one of the men in charge; such lovely memories, going through the locks and information about the surrounding buildings and river. What a busy town Ipswich is! Many thanks to the Rotary Club who organised the day for giving me such a wonderful time.



On behalf of the members of the members of the East Suffolk Blind who were fortunate enough have the River Orwell sailing experience on the Thames Barge, Thistle on Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> July, Fran Ling wishes to thank all of the members of the Rotary Club who were responsible for making this a truly remarkable day from the moment that we stepped aboard through all the wonderful meals and snacks provided and the help that was given whenever it was needed. Once again, our wholehearted thanks to you all.

## **SHOTLEY PENINSULA REPORT**

December 2016 saw the members of the Shotley Peninsula Branch and their volunteers, once again enjoying a Christmas lunch, this time at the Ipswich Hotel, formerly The Cameo. The afternoon was enhanced with the appearance of Father Christmas and two of his elves who distributed gifts to everyone, and there were even a few reindeer amongst the diners. The 2017 Christmas Lunch has already been booked at the same venue.

2017 commenced with the planning of a fund raising and awareness raising Craft Fair to be held at Holbrook Village Hall in May. This proved a great success and resulted in a profit of over £1,000 towards our funds. Another fundraiser is being planned.

**Jean Miller (Chairman)**

## **WOODBIDGE DISTRICT COMMITTEE**

Another year bites the dust, where do they go?

Our social meetings have been very successful 2017 with fine food and entertainment, including some very good speakers, musical acts and quizzes, all of which were greatly enjoyed by the members. We had a wonderful afternoon tea at Seckford Hall in June and are looking forward to the Christmas lunch which this year is being held at Ufford Park Hotel in December. Thanks are certainly due to our wonderful group of helpers and drivers without whom all these events would not be possible.

Again this year we must say thank-you to Woodbridge Town Council for their grant, which is invaluable as it covers the costs of the Coastal Accessible Transport (CATs) minibus that we use each month to get a group of members to and from the social venues.

We are still without a chairperson at present, so special thanks must go to all the committee members for stepping up and taking on extra duties throughout the year, without their commitment we would find it difficult to continue. We are always looking for new volunteer drivers, helpers or indeed committee members, so if you or someone you know have a few spare hours a month and would like to join us please get in touch, the office will be happy to put you in contact.

Members of the Woodbridge Committee send their collective best wishes to all at ESAB for Christmas and the New Year and they look forward to a happy and healthy 2018.

## **STOWMARKET DISTRICT COMMITTEE**

We have a small but willing committee who are keeping things going for our monthly social meetings which average about twenty members. We are in need of a Chairman/Organiser, a rare breed it seems!

This past year we have had two enjoyable outings, one lunch, the other a scrumptious tea. A quiz is always a popular activity and we have had a few interesting Speakers. The important thing to our members is to meet up each month and share company and of course delicious cakes and a cup of tea.

A good relationship has built up with Ian our Community Worker and we appreciate the support he gives us.

With good wishes to all in ESAB from the Stowmarket Committee.

## **BECCLES DISTRICT COMMITTEE**

From a low of 15 members this time last year, we now stand at a very healthy 22 with new members from both Beccles and Bungay. The latest one to join us, Joan Smith, was herself a committee member in the past so is familiar to many of the long-standing members.

Our youngest member is 47 years old and the most senior has just celebrated her 98<sup>th</sup> birthday and continues to lead an active social life and manages very well in her own home.

Two new events were added to our programme this year: an excellent lunch at Bungay Golf Club in April and in May a disco by Sylvia and Russell Clarke, long-standing friends and carers of our much valued member Maureen Thomason who sadly died last month. We continue twice a year to enjoy musical entertainment which is always popular and Michael Venn, husband of our member Joy, is always ready to provide a challenging quiz. We look forward, as always, to our Christmas lunch at St Luke's Church in Beccles, cooked by their excellent chef Duncan and his team.

**Jennifer Langeskov, Chairman**

## **LOWESTOFT LOCAL INDEPENDENT CLUBS FOR THE BLIND**

### **Lowestoft Blind Activities Club (LBAC)**

Monthly activities of target shooting, darts nights, quizzes, tenpin bowling and new age kurling along with two trips to the Greyhound Races and the local theatre have kept everyone very busy. The summer months brought additional activities: a trip to Norwich Castle Museum for a guided tour and a chance to have a close up look at medieval clothes, armour, tools and weapons, then a guided walk and boat trip around Fairhaven Gardens as well as a ramble at Dunwich Forest and canoeing with the Bungay Canoe Club. Thank you to ESAB Lowestoft for a grant of £500 towards our activities.

### **Lowestoft Live Arts**

Members have been very busy making their crafts as well as items to sell and those for local charity; Suffolk Knitters and Stitchers who pass the items on to a variety of other charities. The club is planning a sale of their crafts at Gunton Baptist Church, Montgomery Ave, Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> December, 2 – 5pm. We end the year with a fish & chips party and Christmas raffle.

## **ESAB Social**

Our Social at the Lowestoft 60+ Club is well attended with members enjoying musical entertainment, refreshments and a raffle. Members have enjoyed a day sailing in May with the East Anglian Sailing Trust, in August a garden party hosted by Susan Holmes and an invitation in October from the Lowestoft Lions for a "Summer Extravaganza" evening of entertainment in Gt Yarmouth.

Fundraising: Store collections at Morrisons and Tesco raised £381 and £332 respectively and our street collection £663; these along with other donations from individuals, local charities and businesses help to support our social, Christmas dinner and local taxi scheme. We end the year with a Christmas dinner at the Masonic Hall and return to our meetings as usual on 30<sup>th</sup> January.

I would like thank Jenny, our Community worker, for all her hard work and the volunteers and drivers who help at our social and in the other clubs; without their support we would not be able to take part in any of these activities. Finally thank you to all our members who have made donations and/or have given their time to help me with our collections.

**Kathryn Outterside (Secretary & Treasurer)**

## **LOWESTOFT BLIND BOWLS CLUB**

The AGM and presentation were held at the Lowestoft Railway Bowls Club on Wednesday 25th October.

Following quite a hectic year with home and away matches, time still had to be found for our internal trophies to be played for.

During the Indoor season 2016/2017 we played for the Stan Gilbert Shield where the runners-up were Chris Collis and Alan Lyne. The winners were Ray Ling and Gail Hepworth. Also we played for the United Trophy where the runners-up were Michael Peak and John Aspinall. The winners were Chris Collis and Gail Hepworth. These were both played on a Round Robin system.

During the outdoor season we played another two competitions. The Margaret Reeve Trophy which was a knock-out tournament, the runners-up being Les Pettett and Michael Peak and the winners Chris Collis and Alan Lyne. The Peter Peek Cup was based on the round robin format with the runners-up Les Pettett and Michael Peak and the winners Ron Greaves and Alan Lyne.

Two more trophies were then presented; the Roger Crowe Cup for the Best Attendance All Year. Four people shared this with equal attendance and they were Ron Greaves, Ray Ling, Les Pettett and Michael Peak. The Gail Hepworth Trophy was then awarded for the Best Aggregate Score all year. The runner-up was Michael Peak and Ron Greaves was the winner.

**Gail Hepworth (Secretary)**

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## **A LITTLE BIT OF HUMOUR**

### **BIOLOGY EXAM**

This is straight from Scotland. Students in an advanced Biology class were taking their mid-term exam. The last question was, 'Name seven advantages of Mother's Milk. The question was worth 70 points or none at all. One student, in particular, was hard put to think of seven advantages. However, he wrote:

- 1) It is perfect formula for the child.
- 2) It provides immunity against several diseases.
- 3) It is always the right temperature.
- 4) It is inexpensive.
- 5) It bonds the child to mother, and vice versa.
- 6) It is always available as needed.

And then the student was stuck.

Finally, in desperation, just before the bell rang indicating the end of the test, he wrote:

- 7) It comes in two attractive containers and it's high enough off the ground where the cat can't get it.

He got an A.

### **SOME ACTUAL EXCHANGES BETWEEN AIRLINE PILOTS AND CONTROL TOWERS AROUND THE WORLD.**

A student became lost during a solo cross-country flight.

While attempting to locate the aircraft on radar, ATC asked, "What was your last known position?"

Student: "When I was number one for take-off."

A DC-10 had come in a little hot and thus had an exceedingly long roll out after touching down.



San Jose Tower Noted: "American 751, make a hard right turn at the end of the runway, if you are able.

If you are not able, take the Guadalupe exit off Highway 101, make a right at the lights and return to the airport."

One day the pilot of a Cherokee 180 was told by the tower to hold short of the active runway while a DC-8 landed.

The DC-8 landed, rolled out, turned around, and taxied back past the Cherokee.

Some quick-witted comedian in the DC-8 crew got on the radio and said, "What a cute little plane. Did you make it all by yourself?"

The Cherokee pilot, not about to let the insult go by, came back with a real zinger:

"I made it out of DC-8 parts. Another landing like yours and I'll have enough parts for another one."

While taxiing at London's Gatwick Airport, the crew of a US Air flight departing for Ft. Lauderdale made a wrong turn and came nose to nose with a United 727.

An irate female ground controller lashed out at the US Air crew, screaming: "US Air 539, where the hell are you going?! I told you to turn right onto Charlie taxiway! You turned right on Delta! Stop right there. I know it's difficult for you to tell the difference between C and D, but get it right!"

Continuing her rage to the embarrassed crew, she was now shouting hysterically:

"God! Now you've screwed everything up! It'll take forever to sort this out! You stay right there and don't move till I tell you to! You can expect progressive taxi instructions in about half an hour and I want you to go exactly where I tell you, when I tell you, and how I tell you! You got that, US Air 539?"

"Yes, ma'am," the humbled crew responded.

Naturally, the ground control communications frequency fell terribly silent after the verbal bashing of US Air 539.

Nobody wanted to chance engaging the irate ground controller in her current state of mind. Tension in every cockpit out around Gatwick was definitely running high. Just then an unknown pilot broke the silence and keyed his microphone, asking: "Wasn't I married to you once?"

# EAST SUFFOLK BLIND CONTACT NUMBERS

Beccles/Halesworth/Southwold/Lowestoft JENNY 01502 717159

Leiston/Woodbridge/ Framlingham LESLEY 01473 611650

Felixstowe/Shotley Peninsula/Eye/Stowmarket IAN 01473 788380

Head Office 01473 611011



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# WOLSEY THEATRE CHRISTMAS PANTOMINE

Written by Peter Rowe, and performed in the New Wolsey Theatre's iconic actor-musician style, this brand new adaptation of the classic tale is brimming with fun, frolics... and flour!

All shows from 28<sup>th</sup> November 2017 through to 27<sup>th</sup> January 2018 will be Audio Described performances for the visually impaired. Telephone 01473 295900 for tickets and times or visit their website [www.wolseytheatre.co.uk/shows/red-riding-hood](http://www.wolseytheatre.co.uk/shows/red-riding-hood)

