

**Newsletter Winter 2019/20**

Happy New Year and welcome to our Winter Newsletter!

We hope that you had a great Christmas and we would like to thank everyone that supported us in 2019.

Here is a rundown of what we have coming up over the next few months...

1. **Social Groups**

Our Hanley social group is a friendly group of all ages, we meet at Hanley Library in the JRR Tolkien Room (first floor) on the 2nd and 4th Wednesday of each month from 10.30am til 12.30pm.

We ask for £1 per person per session to contribute to refreshments and at each session we have a speaker or an activity.

Please see our attached events calendar for speakers scheduled over the coming months.

**Please note** that speakers and activities may change due to circumstances out of our control and so if you are coming to a group specifically for a speaker or activity please get in touch prior to the session to check for any changes and to avoid disappointment. Any changes will also be notified on our social media pages.

It was announced in the media in December that the council is proposing to move Hanley library from its current location on Bethesda Street to the Smithfield Development. Should this happen our Social Group will continue to run and we will keep you updated on where we will be as things develop.

1. **Leek meet-ups**

Our leek meet ups are taking place on the first Monday of each month at the White Hart Tea Rooms on Stockwell Street, Leek, ST13 6DH. If you fancy and coffee and a chat, come along between 10.30 and 12.30 where we have a table reserved and our volunteer Gareth will be there to greet you.

**Next meetings:**

**Monday 3rd February**

**Monday 2nd March**

**Monday 6th April**

**Monday 4th May**

1. **Community Support Service**

Do you need...

* Advice and information
* Benefits advice
* Help with form filling
* Support with applications for grants for equipment
* Advice about concessions
* Support with housing issues…or anything else

Get in touch to arrange an appointment with our community support worker and benefits advisor on 07931 327 018.

If you need some support but are unsure if we can assist please get in touch and if it is not our area of expertise we will do our best to refer you to someone who can help.

1. **Family and Friends Sighted Guiding Training**

Last year we ran several Friends and Family Sighted Guide Sessions at Hanley library in partnership with The Guide Dogs Organisation.

Attendees learnt tips and practical advice about how to guide in a safe and appropriate way, including through narrow spaces like doors and up and down steps.

We are looking to hold more sessions in 2020,the first being in April, the exact date to be confirmed. If you have any friends or family that are interested please get in touch to book their place.

1. **Goalball**

We are currently looking into the possibility of setting up a new Goalball team in North Staffordshire.

Goalball is a game played by two teams of three players. The object of the game is to score a goal by bowling the ball along the floor so that it crosses the goal line of the opposing team. The defending team has to prevent the ball going into their goal by stopping it. They must then try to control the ball and attack by bowling the ball back again thereby trying to score in the other goal.

* All players wear eyeshades so that they are totally blindfolded
* Goalball is played on an indoor court that is 18m long and 9m wide. The court has tactile markings (string that is taped to the floor), which helps players determine where they are
* The ball contains internal bells, which help players locate it during play

Get in touch if you would like to give this a go, all ages, abilities and levels of experience welcome.

1. **Steering Group**

Are you interested in helping to shape future services for people living with sight loss in North Staffordshire?

Then why not join our Steering Group; we are a community led charity committed to delivering services that our community wants and needs. Come along and have your say about what services should be available and how they should be delivered.

These meetings are held every 6-8 weeks at Hanley library, usually on a Wednesday morning. Get in touch to be invited to future meetings.

Over the next 6 months we are committed to increasing the services that we offer across the whole of North Staffordshire and we would like to set up new Steering Groups in the Staffordshire Moorlands and Newcastle-under-Lyme. If you would be interested in joining one of these groups to help shape community services in your area please get in touch. More information will be in our next newsletter.

**7. Support us**

A big thank you to everyone who supported us last year, without your support we would be unable to continue our work in the community… so thank you

Here are just a couple of the ways that you can support us:

**Donate your unwanted items and Christmas presents**

Throughout the year we hold charity car boots, tombolas and raffles to raise money for the charity. We will next be attending Regent Road Car boot sale to raise money at the end of January. If you have any unwanted items please get in touch and we will collect them. These could be:

* Used items such as clothes, toys and household items that we can sell at our charity car boots
* New items such as unwanted Christmas presents, gift sets etc. that we can use to raise money through tombolas and raffles.

**Do you sell items on Ebay?**

If you sell items on Ebay you can now donate a percentage of your profits to us by checking the box to ‘Donate a portion to charity’ and searching for Staffordshire Sight Loss Association

**Become a Fundraising Volunteer**

Do you have a bit of spare time? Do you have ideas and enthusiasm and like working as part of a team? We are looking for volunteers who want to join our Fundraising team. We have regular meetings at Hanley library on the first Wednesday of each month from 10.30am til 12.30 pm. At these meetings we plan and organise events and other fundraising activities.

If you would like to come along to a meeting and find out what it’s all about, get in touch on 07931 327 018. Our next meeting will be held on **Wednesday 5th February.**

**8. Other things happening in North Staffordshire**

**Poetry Evening in Leek**

Our volunteer Gareth has organised a Poetry evening in Leek in aid of and to raise money for the charity:

Life, Love and Laughter in Leek: an evening of spoken words and fun.

**The Foxlowe Centre, Stockwell Street, Leek**

**Wednesday 22nd January, 7pm till 10pm**

Local writers will perform some of their pieces about life’s unusual journey. There will be poetry, rhymes, riddles, stories and laughs.

Audience participation encouraged but not obligatory.

Tickets are £7 available from the Foxlowe in Leek

**VI Football taster session**

The Staffordshire FA are interested in holding a VI Football taster session if there is enough demand. Get in touch if you would be interested in this so that we can contact you if there are enough people for this to go ahead.

**RNIB Living with Sight Loss Course**

The RNIB are planning to hold their next Living with Sight Loss course in Stoke-on-Trent in April

These free, informal, community-based courses provide information, advice, support and practical solutions for

people living with sight loss and those close to them. They aim to help you to increase your independence and boost your confidence.

Get in touch to be referred for the course or contact the RNIB directly on 0303 123 9999

**See me, hear me 2020: Celebrating 10 years of Deafvibe**

**Friday 24th April 2020, 10am till 4pm**

An event for Deaf, Sight impaired and Deafblind people

Bet 365 Stadium, Stanley Matthews Way, S-o-T, ST4 4EG

Information, advice, support and equipment demonstrations

Free entry and car parking

2 tours of Stoke City Football ground £1 pp

For more information call or text 07923489800 or email deafday@deafvibe.co.uk

**5. Keep in touch with us**

**Find us on Social Media** 

Look us up on twitter @SightLossStaffs

We are also on Facebook, search for Staffordshire Sight Loss Association where we also have a closed group for sharing ideas and engaging in conversation.

**Our Contact details are:**

**Telephone**: 07931 327018

**Email**: suzanne.roberts001@gmail.com

If you require this newsletter in an alternative format please let us know.