



Support and Social Activities for People with Sight Loss in Reading

Newsletter Autumn 2020

Walford Hall, Carey Street, Reading RG1 7JS

Tel: 0118 957 2960.

Website: <http://readingassociationfortheblind.org>

Editor: Henry Cooke

What's in your Autumn 2020 Newsletter

	Page No
Keeping safe in this time of coronavirus	3
Voices to keep you company	5
Food ordering companies	7
TVP's new Visual Impairment Protocol	9
Meet Hannah, RAB's new Volunteer Co-ordinator	10
Focus on Fundraising	12
Quiz	13
Exemption from face covering card	14
Answers to Quiz	15
Contact the Editor	16

Keeping safe in this time of coronavirus

By Gabrielle Watts, RAB Outreach Manager

The rules keep changing, and the best place to keep up to date is online at gov.uk.coronavirus. If you don't have access yourself, ask family or friends. If that is not possible and you are not sure of the current guidelines, ask your Outreach Worker.

WEARING FACE COVERINGS WHEN YOU HAVE SIGHT LOSS

Putting the mask on before glasses can help with steaming up.

FOR THOSE WITH PERIPHERAL VISION

Purchase masks which have wire across the bridge of the nose — you can then shape it to the face so it doesn't stick out so much. If you need to look down to see a step or obstacle, RNIB recommends removing your mask then replacing.

WHEN YOU DO NOT NEED TO WEAR A FACE COVERING

If your disability is such that your residual vision would be impaired you are exempt from wearing one. Cut out and use the Exemption Card in this newsletter or go to gov.uk.facecoverings.

It is not necessary by law to have an exemption card or letter, but it may be helpful to have one if asked why you are not wearing a face covering. You can make your own home-made sign.

Also exempt are those with a physical or mental illness or impairment or disability.

Likewise, if you are speaking to or providing assistance to someone who relies on lip-reading to communicate.

WHEN YOU MUST WEAR FACE COVERING

If you are not exempt, a face covering must be worn in indoor spaces including public transport, taxis, transport terminals, shopping malls, bars/cafés, except when seated at a table.

SAFE GUIDING

It is now allowed to be guided by people who are outside your household.

Both must wear face coverings, unless exempt.

Practice good hand hygiene, and limit the time spent within 2 metres of each other.

It involves the person being guided lightly holding their sighted guide's elbow, standing slightly behind and to the left or right.

REMEMBER

HANDS – Keep washing hands regularly

FACE — Wear face coverings in inside spaces unless exempt

SPACE — Try and keep 2 metres apart or 1 metre with face covering

Note: This article was written before the government's new lockdown took effect on 5 November.

Voices to keep you company



The RNIB’s Connect Radio has adjusted its schedule as a result of Covid-19 restrictions, but continues to offer a diverse range of services for blind and partially sighted people.

For those RAB members who don’t already know, Connect Radio can be found of Freeview channel 730 and online at <https://www.rnibconnectradio.org.uk>

The radio station explains: “We may sound a little different at the moment — that's because we're following social distancing guidelines to protect our staff and wonderful volunteers which means all the team are working remotely.”

As well as hourly news bulletins, the station offers The Daily Connect which reports new developments and stories from the vision-impaired community, as well as music programmes and books — or “just a voice to keep you company”.

Podcast from Berkshire Vision



The September podcast from the county-wide group features five Berkshire Vision members discussing the impact that the Coronavirus lockdown has had on them.

Face-to-face support was indefinitely suspended, and social activities and personal meetings virtually came to a halt. Berkshire Vision members were disproportionately affected by the measures put in place to combat the virus.

Many visually impaired people reported being shouted at in public for failing to socially distance from people they could not see. Since March things have been somewhat relaxed, but members still report feelings of loneliness, being cut off, anxiety and loss of confidence.

The importance of supporting people remotely has become clear, and Berkshire Vision says it aims to continue delivering remote services in the future.

A transcript of the podcast is available online at https://berkshirevision.org.uk/general/our-members-experience-of-lockdown/?mc_cid=b3de81d7d6&mc_eid=2ab95dd4a5

Food ordering companies

Information for Service Users – with the renewed lockdown from 5 November, government advice is that you should use online shopping where possible, or ask others to shop for you. If you cannot get food, your local council can help: register with them at <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus-shielding-support>

Below are some useful contacts. RAB is passing on this information but cannot make recommendations.

AGE UK – EASY SHOP 0118 9594242 – easyshop@ageukreading.org.uk can arrange to get shopping for those over 70. Will order from the supermarket of your choice and arrange delivery. The cost of your shopping will be charged direct to your debit/credit card, along with the supermarket's delivery charge. Age UK also make a small charge for each shop to help cover their costs.

TESCO offer priority booking slots to customers who are severely sight impaired – 0800 917 7359

MORRISONS: you can phone their call centre on 0345 611 6111 select option 5, and place an order from a list of 46 items that their Community Champions will deliver

WILTSHIRE FARM FOODS 0800 077 3100
www.wiltshirefarmfoods.com – phone for brochure. They deliver ready meals, store in freezer. Can be cooked in microwave or oven. Free delivery

PARSLEY BOX 0800 612 7225 www.parselybox.com – phone for brochure. Ready meals that can be stored for up to 6 months in the cupboard. Microwave. Free next working day delivery.

OAKHOUSE FOODS 0333 370 6700
www.oakhousefoods.co.uk – phone for brochure. Frozen ready meals, cook in microwave or oven. Delivered by a local friendly driver. Phone or order online. Free delivery on orders over £30.

SQUARE DEAL SNACKS: call Julie on 07719 472100 – no ordering done online. A home cooked meal and pudding for £4.80 delivered daily in a chill box around Reading. The menu changes weekly and will be put through your door. Operates seven days a week including a Sunday roast. Square Deal bills people once a month and payment can be made by cash, cheque or bank transfer.

RAB Outreach Team contact details

Gabrielle Watts – 07843 358451

Wendy Whitehead – 07843 358475

Julia Pattenden – 07843 358468

We all work part time: if we do not answer we will respond ASAP

TVP's new Visual Impairment Protocol

Thames Valley Police has launched a new service which provides better security to visually impaired people who need to identify if a person at their front door is a police officer.

The Visual Impairment Protocol (VIP) applies to anyone with a visual impairment, whether full blindness, with a guide dog, or any sight-impaired condition. It can also be used by anyone who cares for, or supports, someone who is visually impaired.

TVP notes that it is very important that police officers who come to the door for whatever reason are able to identify themselves. Usually they have an identification card to prove who they are. However, visually impaired people may not be able to see a photograph or name on an identification card — hence the need for an alternative.

The VIP works by setting up a password for the address of a visually impaired person. When an individual calls either 101 or 999 and informs the call handler that they have a sight impairment, a password of their choice will be agreed.

When an officer then visits that address, he or she will be required to state the password to the person answering the door. If they cannot give the password, then they should not be allowed inside.

If you care for someone who has a visual impairment, or have any friends, family members or colleagues with a visual impairment, TVP encourages you to highlight the protocol to them.

Meet Hannah, RAB's new Volunteer Co-ordinator



Hannah Padgham joined RAB in October as the new Volunteer Co-ordinator. Originally from Kent, Hannah has lived in Reading for about 15 years. She resides in Caversham with her husband, two sons and a black Labrador called Raven. Her eldest child is 13 years old and her youngest son is 10 years old and attends a Special School for children with Autism.

Hannah went to university in Nottingham where she studied social sciences and met her husband. They moved to Sheffield for his work, and then to Reading to be closer to her family in the Medway towns.

In both Nottingham and Sheffield Hannah had worked in the voluntary sector in Community Centres for a total of about ten years. On moving to Reading she did lots of volunteering herself, joined her Parent-Teacher Association and volunteered for the Scouts management committee. She also became a Cub Scout leader as “Akela” the leader of the wolf cub pack.

Scouting reminded Hannah that voluntary work should be fun and also mesh with one’s personal values & motives for volunteering. “I’m a believer in flexible volunteering,” she says. This could mean breaking up an unfeasible big voluntary role into smaller bits and sharing them among several people, or rethinking how an activity could be provided. “I don’t like volunteers being overloaded and feeling tied to things they don’t like. Each person has their own amount of time they have available for volunteering and

this can change over time. A great volunteering experience is enjoyable and serves a purpose!”

Hannah adds: “I’d like to bring this to RAB and help build on the fantastic volunteering already here. Covid-19 gives a chance to reflect and adapt — if it makes sense to do so.” Technology can certainly help at the moment — once you have got used to it. It can come to the rescue of people who get isolated and perhaps cannot access services. “It’s important to make sure they’re involved,” Hannah says.

To start with Hannah will be establishing that we have all the right paperwork in place for our Volunteers and setting up an easy way forward to maintain it. Her aim is to make it as painless as possible for everyone. “A lot of the time, it’s just a matter of me getting it written down what we already know works and is safe.” Hannah says. “Even things like training can be as easy as watching a short video sat at home with a cup of tea and a biscuit at a time that suits the volunteer.”

As she has only just started at the RAB, Hannah has not yet had much contact with the volunteers who play such a big role in the association’s activities. Getting to gradually know them — through email, virtual meetings and phone calls — will be a priority. But she says she is already “impressed with how dedicated and thoughtful they are,” and offers “a huge thank you”.

She expects to learn from volunteers how their roles are structured, what successful work they’d like to do more of, and what gaps there might be in service provision.

Focus on Fundraising

Marion has been working closely with Berkshire Community Foundation and United Way UK following their funding

support to enable the Telephone Befriending Service to be established and continue. Further applications are in progress to keep this vital service running for the rest of 2020 and into 2021. The benefits of this service are so important to members and their loved ones. The Charity is very grateful for the personal donations which have been received in the last few weeks.



The new logo has been implemented and thanks are extended to Open Health for this, and their continued support with forthcoming literature help.

We are delighted to have the support of local company Secure Cloud+ to help the Charity improve its laptops and software, and grateful thanks are extended to Peter Williamson, CEO. Working closely with Akim, Drew and Lucian, laptops were all installed recently, and Dan Knowles, volunteer at RAB, has worked with the Secure Cloud+ team and RAB staff to make sure we are all up and running. The new laptops and software will certainly make our IT work far quicker and efficiently.

Secure Cloud+ also provided care packages which were distributed by RAB staff to members, and the company's ongoing support during this time of heightened restrictions has certainly given us all a fabulous boost to morale and well-being.

Quiz

Which games or sports do you associate with these words?

1. Offside

2. Leg-bye
3. Bunker
4. Foot-fault
5. Scrum half
6. Double top
7. Mallet
8. Half-nelson
9. Salchow
10. Pommel horse
11. Pike
12. Butterfly
13. Velodrome
14. Fosbury flop
15. Parry
16. Cue ball
17. Upper cut
18. Checkmate
19. Inner
20. Jack

Answers on page 15

**Exemption from face covering card.
Can be cut out if required**

 Thank you for
Keep your
Be kind.
I am exempt
from wearing
a face
covering 

 Thank you for
Keep your
Be kind.
Please remove
your face
covering so I can
understand you
better 

Answers to quiz on page 13

1. Football
2. Cricket
3. Golf
4. Tennis
5. Rugby
6. Darts
7. Croquet
8. Wrestling
9. Ice skating
10. Gymnastics
11. Diving
12. Swimming
13. Cycling
14. High jump
15. Fencing
16. Snooker, billiards or pool
17. Boxing
18. Chess
19. Archery
20. Bowls

Contact the Editor - I need your news!

Please send me your news, and anything you think might be of interest for inclusion in a forthcoming edition of the RAB Outlook Newsletter.

I'm also happy to receive your comments about any of the articles appearing in the Newsletter, and suggestions of what you would like to see in future issues.

Henry Cooke 07530 883 092 Email: news@raftb.org

AND — if you would like to receive the Newsletter by email, please let us have your email address. We promise we won't use it for anything other than the RAB Newsletter.

READING ASSOCIATION FOR THE BLIND

Walford Hall

Carey Street

Reading

RG1 7JS

Telephone No: 0118 957 2960

(Outside office hours please leave a message)

Website: www.readingassociationfortheblind.org