



Christmas 2020

INSIGHT

Winter 2020

Welcome to what is strangely the first proper newsletter of 2020 and of course the last as we are so close to the end of the year. We hope you enjoy this edition. If you have any suggestions for future newsletters then please just get in touch.

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INTRODUCTION

Please let us know if there is anything we can do to improve the newsletter. We are always open to suggestions.

As in previous newsletters we abbreviate Rotherham Sight & Sound to **RSS** in the same way we abbreviate Sheffield Royal Society for the Blind to **SRSB**.

Clients can access any services or events in Rotherham or Sheffield regardless of where they live.

160th +1 Anniversary Gala Dinner Friday 17th September 2021



Having had to reschedule our dinner due to COVID there is the chance to join us for a great night to celebrate our 160th Anniversary at the marvellous Weston Park Museum.

For full details and how to book please see Page 4

CORONAVIRUS – THE IMPACT

What a strange year 2020 has been. We started off well in January but by the end of February Coronavirus was starting to take hold and by 23rd March we were in full lockdown. This resulted in enormous changes for us as a charity with all our fundraising events cancelled, many of our services suspended, staff on furlough leave and no visitors for the residents at Cairn Home.

I don't think anybody expected the situation to carry on as long as it has. With no end in sight towards the end of July we regrettably had to take some tough decisions and commence restructuring our services to enable us to ensure the future viability of our charity. This unfortunately resulted in 16 staff being made redundant but we are now very well placed to move forward and continue the development of our services for the future. I would like to

thank all the staff unfortunately made redundant for their commitment to our clients and the charity over many years.

Having spent the last 20 years developing the services and building up the charity I personally, like many other staff, found this a very difficult time, made even more challenging by being the first time in the charity's history to be forced to make staff redundant.

As I write this we hear the news of a possible vaccine which could be being rolled out very soon – I certainly hope so and that Christmas 2021 will be back to some semblance of normality.

Here's hoping that 2021 will be a vast improvement over 2020, I doubt it could be any worse!

Steve Hambleton, General Manager

CHRISTMAS ACTIVITIES

Due to coronavirus our Christmas activities are a bit curtailed this year but we still have a few things for you to join in with.

CHRISTMAS RAFFLE

This year we are holding a special raffle to celebrate our 160th Anniversary. Normally our Christmas raffle is organised by a local rotary group but this year we are having our very own with the first prize a fantastic £160. There are some fantastic prizes

including Christmas hampers a special handmade teddy bear plus lots more!

Unless you have requested otherwise, 2 books of tickets are enclosed for the Christmas Raffle. Tickets are £2.50 per book (£5 for two books). If you can sell them please put the money and the ticket counterfoils in the enclosed plastic bag and return to **SRSB** in the FREEPOST envelope no later than Monday 21st December 2020. Cheques should be made payable to "**SRSB**".

If you or your family are able to sell extra tickets please call **SRSB** as more tickets can always be provided.

If you prefer to make payment for the raffle tickets with a debit /credit card just give us a call on **0114 272 2757**, we can take your payment and enter tickets into the draw for you. It's simple and ALL proceeds will go to **SRSB**.

If you are not able to sell any tickets then don't worry as we appreciate that not everybody is a salesman but please **DO NOT** return the tickets to us as we do have to pay postage for the FREEPOST envelope if you use it. If you would prefer not to receive raffle tickets in future then please just give us a call.

Some people kindly put a postage stamp on the envelope to save us the postage cost which is very much appreciated. However, if you do that please ensure that you cross out the first line of the address on the envelope which starts "Freepost Plus" and the barcode immediately above it.

Please could you also ensure that any person buying raffle tickets are aged 16 or over.

FESTIVE FRIENDS

Do you spend Christmas alone?

Christmas can be a very lonely time for many people, families may live away, and friends are often too busy, lunch clubs and day centres close over the festive period. This can often lead to people feeling quite isolated and down at a time when most are making merry and having a good time.

At **SRSB** we have looked at ways to combat this and a couple of years ago we came up with the idea of Festive Friends where we provided a meal out at The Old Queen's Head on Christmas Day itself, supported by volunteers and a number of our clients who attended were very complimentary about this.

Unfortunately this year we're unable to run our 'Festive Friends' Christmas Day dinner however we know just how isolated some of our clients can feel over the festive period and especially on Christmas Day. We realise it's not just about the meal, it's about having some interaction with another person and some friendly chat. So although we can't all get together staff and volunteers at **SRSB** would like to give anyone who is spending Christmas Day alone, a phone call to share some Christmas cheer.

Please let us know if you are spending the day alone and one of our lovely staff or volunteers will give you a call. Places are limited so please contact us as soon as possible as we have a limited number of people making these calls.

CHRISTMAS CARDS

We are selling packs of Christmas cards for you to purchase. There are two designs in each pack of 10 cards, priced at £3.50 per pack. A great opportunity to send a uniquely designed card to family and friends whilst supporting our services.

If you would like any of these cards just give us a call and we will arrange to have them delivered to you.

CHRISTMAS CARD LABELS

For all the cards that you send, is it a struggle writing them now? If so we have a solution which is a nice festive silver label which reads "Merry Christmas from xxxxxxxxxxxx", with your own name inserted. We charge £3 for a sheet of 48 labels posted to you, £2 for every additional sheet ordered at the same time. If you would like to order these from us please just give **SRSB** a call.

SHEFFIELD CHARITY ADVENT CALENDAR

Sheffield Charity Advent Calendar on Facebook encourages people, along with their friends and family, to donate £1 or £2 a day to a Sheffield-based charity throughout advent.

There are 24 Sheffield charities in total that have been selected and for the second year **SRSB** is one of the charities fortunate to have been selected by the organisers.

SRSB AND RSS

160TH ANNIVERSARY

Sadly due to Covid 19 regulations we had to postpone our 160th Gala Dinner at Weston Park Museum this year. However we are hoping to celebrate 160 plus 1 next year on Friday 17th September. We will all be ready for a party by then! For further information and to book tickets do get in touch.

You can see all the chosen charities at www.facebook.com/SheffieldCharityAdvent/ and each day from December 1st a different charity is featured. **SRSB** will be featured on 9th December.

CALENDARS AND DIARIES

We have the following large print products available:

A3 Calendar £4

A6 Pocket Diary £6.25

A5 Midi Diary £8.25

A4 Desk Diary £10.25

Large print Address Books and Telephone Books are also available, just give Rob a call to discuss your requirements.

CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR HOLIDAYS

To give all our staff and volunteers a well-earned break over Christmas, our Mappin Street and Ship Hill Centres will be closed from Thursday 24th December and will re-open on Monday 4th January 2020.

This dinner is being held at Weston Park Museum which is closely linked to our history as it was the home of the Harrison sisters who started our organisation 16 decades ago by opening the workshops on West Street employing blind people.

Further details will be available nearer the time but if you want to purchase tickets we have them on sale now, price £50 which will include a drink on

arrival, a marvellous dinner and the opportunity to look around the museum.

Go on, treat yourself or it would also make a marvellous Christmas/ Birthday gift.

To purchase your ticket just give us a call or book online at www.shorturl.at/cz137

HOLIDAYS

We aren't planning any holidays for 2021 at the moment but as soon as we are able to do so we will let you know.

STAFF CHANGES

As previously mentioned a number of staff were made redundant during August and September. However, five new roles were created and these were all taken by existing staff as follows:

- Deaf Services Co-ordinator based at Rotherham was taken by Tony Atkin who had previously been one of our Technology Trainers.
- Delivery Driver/Property Maintenance covering both our Sheffield and Rotherham Centres was taken by Dennis Crofts, previously one of our minibus drivers.
- Equipment Officer supporting clients and staff across both our Sheffield and Rotherham Centres was taken by Rob McCann who previously ran our Equipment Centre.
- Activities & Groups Co-ordinator for clients across both our

Sheffield and Rotherham Centres was taken by Joy Waters who previously was our Café Assistant.

- Development Officer, responsible for delivering visual impairment awareness training and our Looking Ahead courses, was taken by Liz Bowman who previously was part of our Community Engagement Team.

They have all settled into their new roles and starting to develop additional services.

ZOOM VIDEO AND TELEPHONE CONFERENCING

Many of our services and activities are now being delivered via Zoom. Some people may feel a bit inhibited or nervous about using this new way of working but, based on feedback we have received from clients who we have persuaded to try it, please be assured that it is something that you can do if you have an internet connection and we will guide you through the process.

For people without an internet connection then we have set up telephone conference facilities where we call you and join you into a group session.

LOOKING AHEAD COURSES

At the moment these courses are only available being delivered online via Zoom video conferencing.

The course offers an introduction to help and support for daily living, accessing information in print, magnifiers, mobility, how IT and

mobile phones can help and a range of guest speakers from both within and beyond **SRSB** and **RSS**.

The course has been offered for the last six years and comments from past attendees have highlighted a growth in confidence, friendships formed during the course and increased knowledge about how to access support as well as what is available.

If you think you might benefit from signing up for the course, please contact Liz Bowman.

EMOTIONAL SUPPORT

Our Emotional Support Officer, Hayley Martin, is working albeit all her consultations are now being done over the phone. She is in great demand at the moment but she does have some capacity to take on more clients. If you feel that you might benefit and would like an informal chat with Hayley just give us a call and we will ask her to call you.

“HOW TO” VIDEOS

Rob McCann, our Equipment Advisor as gone into the movie business and started producing his own “how to” videos where he explains the purpose of equipment and how to use it. eg Setting up a Communiclock, Using a Liquid Level Indicator etc. These are being added to all the time and are on our YouTube channel – www.youtube.com/srsbcharity.

If you would like to suggest other products or technology that would be useful then please get in touch with us.

JOB CLUB

The current situation may not be ideal for people looking to get into work but if you are considering looking for work or to retain your existing job then our job club may be for you. We have another job club starting in January, again via Zoom video conferencing, so please contact us for further information.

COMMUNITY ADVICE SERVICES

Our Community Advice Officers are working partially in the office and partially from home advising clients, carrying out initial assessments, organising delivery of equipment, attending to welfare benefit claims etc. If you require any help, support or advice please do not hesitate to contact us.

HEARING AID SERVICES

We are able to service hearing aids at both Rotherham and Sheffield or if we can't carry out any aspect we can contact the audiology department on your behalf. If you require batteries, tubing or anything else regarding your hearing aids then please get in touch with us.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

Joy Waters, our new Activities and Groups Co-ordinator, is organising the following groups:

Cycling

After positive feedback from all who attended the preliminary sessions at Hillsborough Park we had a regular monthly session prior to lockdown in

March this year. In October we restarted the sessions for 4 clients on a weekly basis observing full social distancing but the recent lockdown has suspended these sessions. We are hopeful that they will restart soon and if you would like to be included please just let us know.

The cost is £5 per person per session.

Tai Chi

Fridays, 2:30pm to 3:30pm via Zoom

Join this virtual Tai Chi session with Sandra who used to run the classes at our centres. Sandra has been working with our vision impaired clients for over 10 years, so you are in experienced hands. She will give step by step instructions to the practice and also set practice exercises for the group.

New starters are welcome to join these sessions, so don't worry if you don't have any experience.

These sessions are free of charge.

Yoga

We are investigating starting virtual yoga sessions as well so please let us know if you would be interested in these.

Zoom Weekly Get Together

Every Tuesday 1pm to 2pm via Zoom

Join us on our weekly Zoom get together to have some fun with quizzes etc.

Telephone Conference Groups

For clients who can't manage Zoom video conferencing we have started a number of telephone conference

groups for clients that used to attend our Mappin Street Activities Centre but anybody can join these groups and we can start new groups if there is a particular subject that you would like covering – just let us know.

Creative Writing Group

Every Tuesday, 11am to 12noon via telephone conferencing

This group used to meet every Friday morning at our Mappin Street Centre but it is now meeting via telephone conferencing.

If you would like to join in then please just get in touch with us.

Charles Bonnet Support Group

We are looking at restarting this group, probably via telephone conferencing. If you would like to join this group then please just get in touch with us.

Activity Packs

In addition to all the groups that she organises Joy also prepares and mails out an Activity Pack every week to more than 150 clients. Each pack contains a large print Word Search, Crossword, Quiz Questions, Colouring Page and Sudoko with the solutions sent out the following week. For people that struggle with large print we will endeavour to identify alternative solutions.

If you would like to try an activity pack then please just give us a call.

CHILDREN & FAMILY SERVICES – SRSB & RSS

Our dedicated Children and Families Officer was unfortunately made redundant as all the group activities have had to stop due to COVID. However, our Community Advice Officers can still support families with welfare benefits such as completing Disability Living Allowance claims, Family Fund applications etc. Please

just get in touch with us if you require any support or advice.

We are also doing a themed Activity Pack for children, the first one being for Halloween and the next one will be a Christmas theme. If your child didn't receive the Halloween pack and would like the Christmas pack then please let us know.

GROUPS AND CLUBS

SHEFFIELD MACULAR GROUP

Degeneration of the macular results in loss of central vision. It is usually a result of ageing and is the commonest form of sight loss in older people. This group, which is a branch of the national Macular Society, now meets via telephone conference calls.

New members are most welcome, just come along.

For more information please contact Nick Woodford on **0114 236 8971** or Robin Story **0114 236 2251**, email: story.rob@yaho.co.uk

RP SUPPORT GROUP

RP (Retinitis Pigmentosa) is an eye condition affecting the retina usually affecting peripheral vision first and, in time, central vision as well. It is usually inherited.

This group has not met during the COVID crisis and it seems such a long time since our last meeting so we have decided to hold a virtual catch up on

Thursday 14th January at 2.30pm. The meeting will be held via Zoom, please let us know if you are interested and you will be sent out instructions on how to join the meeting nearer the time. If you require any further information please contact Joanne.

CHARLES BONNET SYNDROME (CBS) SUPPORT GROUP

Are you experiencing vivid, silent visual hallucinations?

If so you are not alone, you may be suffering from a condition called Charles Bonnet Syndrome that affects many people of all ages who are having problems with their vision. The onset of these hallucinations are not due to mental health but are caused by loss of sight. They can be very disturbing and can impact negatively on your daily life.

As mentioned earlier in this newsletter we are looking to get this group operating again.

VOLUNTEERS

Our current requirement for volunteers is significantly reduced as we aren't running any group activities or fundraising events but hopefully at

some point in 2021 these may be able to resume in some form and we will be looking for volunteers at that point.

We currently have volunteers staying in touch with clients by phone who benefit from a weekly telephone call. If you would like a weekly call to check that you are OK or just to relive the boredom of lockdown then please give us a call.

We also have volunteers who contact clients that we haven't been in touch with for any reason in the last 6 months just to check that they are OK.

We also have a few volunteers who help us out with other tasks such as

FUNDRAISING

Hope this finds you staying well and safe in the current climate. What a strange year it has been for fundraising we should have been celebrating our 160th Anniversary! But with many events, collections cancelled it has left a huge shortfall in funds for **SRSB**. To help with this we launched a Covid-19 Appeal and would like to thank everyone who donated to the appeal.

We have also come up with some new virtual fundraising events. So you can join us in a safe environment, have a bit of fun and a break from these difficult times.

Full information on all our current events are below. To join us at any event you can book online, give us a call on **0114 272 2757** or email fundraising@srsb.org.uk

stuffing envelopes to send out this newsletter.

We would not be able to deliver this level of services for our clients without the support of our amazing volunteers.

The impact on the lives of our clients is huge and our thanks are extended to all our volunteers, both those active as well as currently inactive due to COVID restrictions, for their commitment and dedication to supporting our clients.

Coming up:-

SRSB VIRTUAL CHRISTMAS PUB QUIZ

Thursday 3rd December, 7:30pm via Zoom

Put those brain cells to the test in the comfort of your own home. Put the kettle on or open the wine and have some fun. This special festive quiz is hosted by Radio Sheffield's very own, the lovely Paulette Edwards so laughs are guaranteed. It's a great way to start the Festive Session. Book your place and we will send your Zoom joining instructions it's as simple as that, would be good to see you on the night.

The winning household wins 4 x meals from The Old Queens Head where we normally hold the Quiz. If Covid regulations prevent the pub from opening, a take away service is available – perfect !

Entry £10 per household

VIRTUAL CHRISTMAS WINE

TASTING

Friday 11th December 7pm, via Zoom

Hosted by local bespoke off-license
Starmore Boss

Every year we have traditionally held a food and wine tasting event at Mappin Street which sadly this year we can't do. So we are inviting you to our first virtual wine tasting for **SRSB**. It is a great opportunity to sample new wines for Christmas all you need is access to the internet, book your place and we will do the rest. Prior to the event we will deliver your drinks which will be 4 wines and a sherry. You will also receive a list of recommended food accompaniments for the wines with enough time to purchase them should you wish. We have tried so hard to be able to provide the food for you but with Covid regulations sadly this is not practical.

On the night Barry from Starmore Boss will join you in your living room via Zoom and explain all about the drink, the grapes, the history, the vineyard the choice of food to go with it etc. Do join us for this special event.

Ticket Price £25

VIRTUAL TEMPLE SPA PARTY

Wednesday 20th January, 7pm via Zoom, Free Entry

You are invited to join us for our first virtual Temple Spa Experience .

New Year, new you? Why not treat yourself to a gorgeous relaxing spa experience over Zoom to vanish those

post-Christmas blues and maybe kick start a new skincare regime?

Join from the comfort of your own home as we go on a virtual experience that will include a gorgeous facial.

The evening will be led by Temple Spa ambassador Caroline Taylor. A little introduction for anyone who hasn't heard of Temple Spa or tried their products before. Temple Spa is a British brand with a Mediterranean soul. The luxurious, anti-ageing, results driven, skincare and spa experiences allow you to 'spa wherever you are'. All of the products are tailored to your skin type and focussed on slowing the ageing process as well as reversing the signs of ageing, so whatever your skin is up to you can trust the products will work for you!

Now more than ever there has never been a better time to take care of our wellbeing - mind, body & soul.

✦✦ Enjoy a signature Slumber facial and try some of our beautiful body products.

✦✦ Receive a Temple Spa Takeaway pack to your door with a gorgeous selection of luxurious products and gain advice on how to spa at home, learning how to take care of ourselves and our skin through the winter months.

✦✦ Treat yourself to award winning products and gifts in exclusive discounted collections.

✦✦ Enjoy feeling relaxed and pampered.

✦✦ Caroline will donate 20% of any sales on the evening to **SRSB**. There will also be a raffle to win a beautiful hamper of Temple Spa treats worth

£150+ as well as the opportunity to buy a 'square' with proceeds split between the winner and **SRSB**.

Places are limited so please get in touch as soon as possible if you would like to attend and we will send your spa pack in the post for the evening. If there is sufficient demand we will look to put on additional dates.

If events are not for you there are other ways you can get involved:-

SRSB WEATHER LOTTERY

Fancy a flutter want the chance to win up to £25,000 per week in 2021 and support **SRSB** then we have just the thing for you. Join our Weather Lottery – when you join you are given a unique 6 digit lucky number to be entered into the weekly Weather Lottery Draw with the chance to win up to £25,000. If you choose more than one entry you are given a separate lucky number for each entry. The Weather Lottery result is based on the last digit of the Fahrenheit temperature from 6 popular European destinations hence the name. It costs just £1 a week per entry and prizes are given when 3,4,5 and 6 numbers match.

FREE WILL WEEK

This was in October and was well attended. It is where people see a solicitor for advice about making a will and if they choose to make a will, **SRSB** pay the solicitor for the cost of a straightforward, basic will. We would

hope that you will consider making **SRSB** a beneficiary under the will but there is no obligation to do so.

We will be arranging another free will week in Spring 2021, further information in our next newsletter.

For further information and to receive a copy of our legacy leaflet please call our Legacy Officer, Sue Coggin or email giftinwills@srsb.org.uk

A Very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year from Sue & Jane, the Fundraising and Marketing Team at SRSB.

THANK YOU

After 15 happy years at **SRSB** I will be retiring at the end of January 2021. I would like to thank you all for your support over the years you are all truly amazing. I am sorry I won't be able to see you at Mappin Street before I go but hope to pop in when things are back to the new normal. Take care and stay safe.

Sue Coggin, Fundraising Manager

CONCLUSION

Don't forget, we are **here to help you**. If we can't do something ourselves we almost certainly know somebody who can – Just contact us at **SRSB** or **RSS**.

Always Making a Difference in Sheffield and Rotherham.

Our next newsletter should be arriving with you in February.



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