



**Wirral Society of the Blind and Partially Sighted
Christmas 2020
Newsletter.**





Dear All

It's been a while since we've produced a newsletter so we have a bit of catching up to do.

What a year we have all had, we're in very strange times and, like everyone else, we have had to adapt quickly to changed circumstances to ensure our community is supported. Now we're all nearly through this challenging year we can focus what we have learned and go into the year ahead with confidence and positivity for the future. With Christmas upon us, although it may be a little different to usual for many people, it is still a time where we can raise our spirits and celebrate this special time of year the best we can.

So, light up your trees, play your favourite Christmas songs and join us in celebrating achievements that we have all made. We have included a few snap shots of our year and things we have done to support each other.

We send our very best wishes to you all. Stay safe, keep positive and wrap yourselves up in the magic of Christmas.

We like to encourage participation in this newsletter and welcome your contributions. If you would like to contribute, please contact Jo Tudor. Jo can be contacted on 0151 652 8877 or jo@wirralsociety.org.uk.

Ashville In Lockdown

March 2020 saw the beginning of what we all thought would be a 12 week period of lockdown when COVID19 was declared a World Pandemic. Following this initial period of uncertainties, we had to close the doors of Ashville Lodge on the 20th March.

We set up a new approach to intervention and managed to continue supporting our members with the help of crisis funding, volunteers and two staff members. This distance support through telephone and on line facilities; this lasted for 14 weeks.



What did we do?

In addition to practical and emotional support, we continued to post 'Feel Good,' articles and positive news on our social media pages. One of our members produced a song to help keep people hopeful and come through the most difficult time during Ashville closure. We also produced a short video when we were working towards our return to ensure people that our Resource Centre is safe and COVID compliant. You can access both through the links below.

<https://youtu.be/Y8vqzDwChkc>

<https://youtu.be/u1u89atDtBO>

Arty Pants

Our own Jo Tudor put together a series of videos setting herself goals to complete ? challenges under the name of 'ArtyPants(reflecting her art tutor role) This was such good fun to watch and got people involved both supporting her and looking forward to what ArtyPants would be up to next.



You can access the video using this link;

<https://youtu.be/OMINVJf5P-E>

Return to Ashville Lodge

This was a difficult task! Ashville Lodge had stood quiet for 14 weeks and nature had taken its charge. It took a team of staff and volunteers to clean up the gardens and have a major sort out of the Centre.

Following two weeks hard work we had transformed the Centre. Procedures were put in place guided by Mike Jones, one of our Directors and Health and safety advisor. Mike worked to support us in becoming COVID19 compliant and put operating procedures in place for us to safely re-open.

We have been able to run our tutor led classes, although numbers have been restricted, we split classes and increased the number of weekly sessions, this enabled members to continue to take part. Low vision demonstrations have been arranged on an appointment system to minimise the amount of people in the building at one time. We have been unable to re-introduce our social groups at this time but hope this will be possible in the Spring.

Coming Through The Rain

Art and Creative activities have always been a big part of our approach to encourage people to explore their abilities and goals. During these difficult times, volunteers and members were becoming involved in producing artwork and sharing their work on social media.

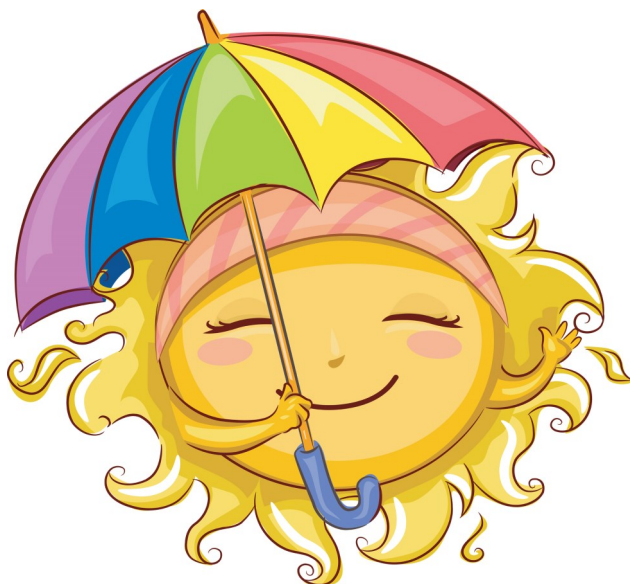
They used art and creativity to encourage people to join in and get involved with 'feel good,' activities up to when the Centre could re-open.

On return to Ashville, our music group produced a song with an accompanying video with the aim of keeping people positive and hopeful.

This also worked to raise awareness of our Charity and what people can come through with the support and encouragement from an organisation like this.

Watch the video, ' Sunshine Through the Rain,' with the following link.

<https://youtu.be/yaPSITxlbak>.





Ashville On Line Shop

As you are all aware, we have been unable to hold our annual events over this year. We have recently set up an on line shop through our website where you can still buy a range of products including Christmas gifts and hand made crafts. The shop can be accessed through our website at www.wirralsociety.org.uk. We hope you like this new facility,.



We hope you have enjoyed catching up with our 2020 year. It has been very challenging but has demonstrated how the innovation and strength of our Charity and many more like us, have the ability to adapt and come through the most difficult times.

We wish you all the very best for this Christmas and look forward to starting a new year with strength and confidence for the future.

With our sincere thanks to all who have supported us over this year through crisis grants, donations and encouragement. This help is very much appreciated and has helped us to continue supporting our community and secure future services.