

December Newsletter

Dear All,

In some ways, this year has flown by then in others, it feels like the longest one yet... Whatever people's experience has been though, I think it's fair to say we're all hoping 2021 will see fewer restrictions and a return to a more normal day to day, which is looking more and more likely with these vaccines on the horizon. In the meantime, it's about keeping cosy, staying connected, and concentrating on the smaller things that make us feel good. Even if you don't fancy anything we have going on in this newsletter, always feel free to give us a call to say hello- we're missing the social groups too!



Digital Inclusion Project: We are very pleased that our first experiment with loaning out a simple tablet to access Zoom has been a success. Using a simcard like a mobile phone there is no need to sign up to the internet, and our kind guinea pig was able to access our Zoom tea and talks and RNCM listen-along from home with no previous experience of using a smartphone/tablet. We now hope to extend this to the other members who have expressed an interest.

Christmas Lunch: Get your order in by 8th December for a Christmas lunch delivery on Tuesday 22nd December. We will be getting turkey and pigs in blankets from Axon's butchers in Didsbury, and the veg from Withington veg to keep it local; Christmas log or Christmas pudding for dessert?

Craft Zoom: To get ourselves feeling at least a little bit Christmassy, we have put together a Christmas Craft Zoom session with help from crafter Aysha. Supported by the Forever Manchester Fund, we can provide the paper and materials needed to make these lovely, simple Christmas decorations. No experience or skill needed (honestly), and a chance to play some Christmas carols and see familiar faces. The session will be on Zoom on Monday 7th December at 2pm. Let the



office know if you'd like to join, and we can organise a volunteer to drop off the craft kit. If you do not zoom but would like to have a go at crafting, we can still drop off a package with instructions so don't let that stop you getting creative! All welcome, no cost, see you there...



Christmas Card Deliveries: Remember to let the office know if you have some local cards you'd like help getting delivered- or if you would like help getting hold of some cards to send.



Positive Living: It was lovely to see some familiar faces (bit like playing guess who behind everyone's masks and visors!) in November, and we pleased to be able to continue this support group throughout lockdown and whatever tier system we end up. If anyone is feeling that their mental health is suffering as a result of lockdown or in general, please get in touch. The next groups will meet on Monday 14th December.

Vaccine: Will you be getting the Coronavirus vaccine? Do you have any concerns? Do you or someone you know worry about this? We have been urged by local GPs and health care professionals to encourage people to give some feedback around this, so that they can answer questions and hopefully help people to make the decision that's right for them.

Zoom Sessions

Tea and Talks: The next talk will be taking place on Monday 21st December 2pm: with Roger Brown; musician and actor telling tales of his Salford Childhood, entertainment and laughter guaranteed...!" Sit back at home, relax and enjoy some cake courtesy of the Co-op, delivered by volunteers!

Exercise Classes: For the time being, these are continuing on Zoom on Fridays with our instructor, Ruby. If you are feeling a bit unfit, would like to see some friendly faces, get into a routine or simply have a good stretch, why not join at either 10.30 am (slightly harder work) or 11.30 (seated, focus on strength and balance).

Tai Chi : Every Wednesday Bee Bee is teaching Tai Chi at 11am. Take 30 minutes out of your morning to breathe deeply, stretch and relax. No experience necessary, a very soothing and welcoming session.

End of Year Quiz! On Wednesday 30st December, join us on Zoom for an end of year quiz! Chances to win top prizes, have a bit of a reminiscence about the highs and lows of this strange year, and look forward to the future.

Collections for Fallowfield and Withington Foodbank... Many small charities, church groups, community groups and individuals usually collect towards Christmas treats for local disadvantaged families. Sadly, many of these cannot meet, cannot collect donations and cannot fundraise this year because of the pandemic. So, Fallowfield and Withington Foodbank are stepping into the breach and will contribute the 'edible' side of Christmas goody bags for some local children this year. If you feel able to donate seasonal sweets or chocolate such as small selection boxes, tubes of sweets, chocolate coins etc it will be a great help towards our target!

Meet the Team: Pip Cotterill

My name is Pip (short for Philippa) Cotterill and I am the current Chair of the Assist Board. I came to Manchester in 1966 to come to university and have never left! Not only has it got all I want in terms of culture and further education, but it is surrounded by lovely countryside. When I graduated, I worked for the local Social Services Department in community development, Withington being part of my 'area'. I then had several jobs in social care and the NHS, and when I retired, I was in charge of commissioning social care services for older people - including Assist.

I grew up in Malaya, where my father was a rubber planter. We came back to England in 1959, when I was 11. I vividly remember my first winter here. I have never been so cold!

Since I have retired, I try to go to zumba classes twice a week at the gym. I am a member of 2 reading groups and do a history course. I am a Board member of a housing association for older people. I also joined the Assist Board; and was honoured when they asked me to be Chair two years later. I believe Assist has done really good work for the past 51 years, and hope I can play a small part in us continuing to do so..



And finally, hope you enjoy our wordy extras this month, and the answers to that bonfire quiz from November. We have a short story written by Keith Dansey, a Manchester based writer, and word search by Janice. Wishing all a merry Christmas, in whatever way we are able to celebrate it's certainly a time to treat ourselves and take good care.

Kindest Regards, Amelia and all at Assist.