

May Newsletter

Dear All,

Well, it feels like we've been catapulted into warmer weather with snow one minute and glorious sunshine the next, and barely enough time to get those thermals back in the cupboard where they belong! Let's hope the temperature keeps rising for the Summer and those Covid numbers keep coming down and who knows, we may be able to make a trip to the seaside later in the year after all...



Back in the present moment however, these rules seem to be on steady path of relaxation with the latest changes being pubs and restaurants opening their gardens from April 12th, and groups of six allowed to meet indoors from May 17th. For some people these feel like big changes compared to the structure and isolation of the past year, and it is going to take a bit of time to get used to the possibility of meeting up with friends and family again in a more normal way (i.e., not waving through a window or stood on a doorstep). If you are really struggling with this, why not give the office a call to see if we can match you up with someone to go for a quiet walk around the block, or to meet at Assist or a café for a cup of tea? The number is 0161 434 9216.



Making the most of the rule changes; it has been fantastic to see those who have come along to sit in our **"Assist Garden"** /corner of the car park, which has turned out to be a real suntrap and home to some heartwarming reunions. Let us know if you would like to join on a Wednesday or Thursday, either morning at 11 or later at 1pm. There's plenty of tea, coffee and biscuits, and we're able to offer lifts from volunteer drivers if getting here is a struggle (subject to



availability on the day and following covid guidelines) We are asking for a £1 donation to help cover costs and would like to

thank volunteers Ros, Ray, Sally, David and Barbara for all their help in making these sessions so welcoming, preparing drinks, giving lifts and getting those planters in order!

Exercise Classes: From May 21st, we will be cautiously restarting our Friday exercise sessions indoors. Moving from the small, upstairs lounge to the much larger downstairs room will enable for good ventilation of the space and clear social distancing. We may well keep a zoom session going alongside the physical groups for those who feel they would prefer that for the time being.

Tai Chi: We are going to experiment with holding seated Tai Chi sessions in person in the Assist Garden on Wednesday mornings. Do get in touch if you are interested.

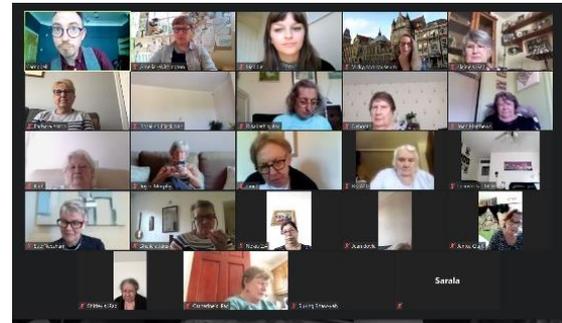
Lunch Club Deliveries: For the time being we will keep lunch club as a delivery service until, all being well, mid-June, when larger groups should be able to meet indoors. Thanks to everyone for their patience and donations, and to the volunteers for their time- we will get there!

Positive Living: will be on Monday 10th May, at the church, with a group at 1pm and a second at 2.30. Last month Debra and the groups made the most of the sunshine and took the sessions outdoors. As the group is classed as a support group, we will aim to meet outdoors again but should the weather be against us we have reserved room in the church building, as this is allowed under the guidelines. We ask for a £2 donation to cover our costs and can provide a lift if needed.



Digital Drop In: We have recently been awarded funding from Manchester City Council via their Covid19 Impact grant, which will enable us to hire a worker to help support people with their digital queries. There will be some budget for helping people to buy devices where there is need, and some to go towards our digital drop in sessions once they are able to restart (hopefully mid-June). In the meantime, we will be setting up one to one outdoor sessions with our student volunteers- do let us know if you would like to book and bring along the phone/tablet/laptop that's not been behaving/you would like help with and we'll do our best!

Zoom Tea and Talks this month we have speaker Tessa Boase joining us to talk about the founder of the RSPB's life and work and why this needs to be celebrated with a statue in Fletcher Moss. "Emily Williamson, 34, was so horrified by the fashion for feathered hats that she launched a campaign to halt the plumage trade... And so the Society for the Protection of Birds was born. The year was 1889..." To find out more join us at 2pm on **Monday 17th May**, and we'll have the usual little tea and cake parcels delivered. Book by calling the office or send an email to withingtonassist@gmail.com, and the member ID number to join on the day is 849 1844 2109.



Meet the Trustees: Brian Stevenson

Hello, I'm Brian Stevenson. Originally from Leicester (I still support the football team), I moved to Manchester in 1971, and have lived in Withington for 36 years now. Many people seem to remember me from my time in Withington Library in the 70s and 80s. In fact some people think I'm still there! After my library career in Manchester and Stockport, I went on to work for the Audit Commission and Government Office North West. Since retiring I've worked as a lay member for the Health and Care Professions Council, and currently for Health Education England. I'm married to Anne Strachan, who many people also seem to know from her work with the Development Education Project in Didsbury. I have three sons: one working at the Learning and Work Institute, one at Durham Uni and one at Parris Wood College. I enjoy music, reading, cinema and theatre, also walking, cycling and travel as leisure interests. I joined ASSIST as a volunteer driver two years ago.



Hoping to see you soon, take care everyone and keep in touch,

from Amelia and all at Assist.