



# Sandwell Visually Impaired (SVI)

Newsletter Issue 9

Summer 2008

## Welcome

SVI aims to make living and/or working in Sandwell better for people coping with sight loss.

Welcome to our summer newsletter.

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## SVI Joins Housing Team

SVI now have a member on the council's Housing Disability Action Group. With user involvement the group's role is to 'reality check' policies, practices and procedures. They look at issues like:

- Disability housing lists
- Lifetime homes
- Harassment and anti social behaviour rules
- Adaptations and disabled facilities grants

So if you've got issues your housing agent or local housing office are unable to help you with, we would like to hear from you. Contact Ray on 0121 643 7693 or email at: [rays-home@raynetbrm.plus.com](mailto:rays-home@raynetbrm.plus.com).



## A Social Afternoon with SVI

Over 60 SVI members came to the June 'Open Members' meeting. We arrange these quarterly and meet all travel costs.

Save money - save energy. Kathy from the council's Warm Front group told us about long life bulbs (freebies were given out) and loft insulation (we need 10 inches of it). All insulation and central heating costs, even for cavity wall insulation can be met. It's worth giving Kathy a buzz on 0121 569 5810 to book your home assessment visit.

## Testing Times

We finished with an exciting quiz. Most went home a little wiser and everyone a winner! Terry and Gary from SAIBA (Sandwell Active Independent Blind Association) organised this enjoyable event. Sandra let us know about the activities SAIBA members enjoy (pubs, theatre visits, holidays in Britain and abroad). To find out more buzz Sandra on 0121 601 0637 or Stuart on 0121 429 8104

Visit [www.sandwellvisuallyimpaired.org.uk](http://www.sandwellvisuallyimpaired.org.uk) for a full account of the day.

If you would like an invite to the next 'Open' meeting' join SVI (please use the enclosed membership form) and you will receive future invites automatically.

## Vision Service

Gary from the councils' Vision services outlined the help offered to people who are newly referred to them following being diagnosed with sight loss. You would be surprised at the care taken to meet your needs! He introduced Polly who gives advice and counselling. Both can be contacted on 0121 558 5555.

## Keeping in Trim

It's great, we've received replies from 42 members who would like to join the Slimwell/ Cookwell sessions. We're now making final arrangements to get running.



## The Talking News

Did you know that for 30+ years Sandwell has had its own talking newspaper? In the midst of SVI we've two journalist members, Ray and Peter who produce it weekly and the Beacon Centre duplicate and organise its distribution.

## Older People's Champions

The PCT through Agewell have established three area based Champions for older people in Sandwell. Their purpose is to take the worry out of making lifestyle choices that can get us down. So if you're over 50 and a bit lonely or need hands on help with travel



## Our Acclaimed Website is Worth a Visit

Our website is fully accessible, kept up to date and is full of helpful and practical information. It's at: [www.sandwellvisuallyimpaired.org.uk](http://www.sandwellvisuallyimpaired.org.uk)

On the site you can find the latest news, our calendar of events, useful practical hints and tips, the Newsletter in audio and electronic formats and plenty of things to keep you informed and interested. And

It's available free on tape or for a £10 annually on CD. If you would like to receive a copy please contact Martin on 01902 880 111 for yours.

We are hoping to produce and distribute the paper ourselves one day; in the meantime we are seeking to agree copyright

arrangements, give one of them a buzz. They're also great at introducing you to where more help can be found. They are:

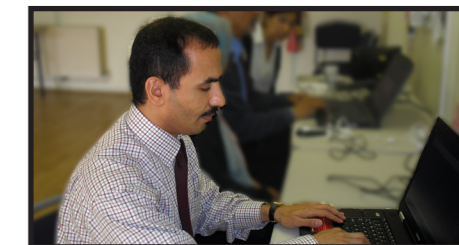
Edna Barker, Smethwick and Oldbury. Tel: 07814 540 643 or 0121 569 5335

Maggie Turner, Wednesbury and West Bromwich. Tel: 07814 262 044 or 0121 569 5287

Karen Owen, Rowley Regis and Tipton. Tel: 07814 540 651 or 0121 569 5245

you can keep in touch with us using the 'Contact Us' form to let us know your news, views and your opinions about our services.

The Links Section is very useful as it lists a huge range of companies, organisations and service providers. Shopping couldn't be easier!



with local papers so it can be listened to on our website [www.sandwellvisuallyimpaired.org.uk](http://www.sandwellvisuallyimpaired.org.uk)



## **SVI Annual Forum 2008**

We've got an amazing line up of speakers at our fourth Annual Forum to be held on Wednesday, 29 October this year. They're Blind Dave, the first disabled person in the world to have run 7 marathons in 7 continents on 7 consecutive days, Ian the second blind magistrate in Britain and Saeed a founder member of SVI.

There promises to be a lot of fun with this line-up so why not make it a date in your diary. Cllr Bob Price, Sandwell's Mayor, kicks it off at 10.30am till 2pm (Buffet lunch provided) at the Training and Development Centre, Oldbury. Invites will be sent to you in September.

## **Stop press**

We're delighted to report we are still growing. The spring newsletter attracted a further 45 members; we now have 400 or 25% of the 1,600 people registered with sight loss in Sandwell. You've done us proud, thanks for your support. We've a lot to offer so SVI would welcome more members. Your support enables us to seek a better service.

## **Membership**

There's a membership form enclosed. If you're not sure you are a member, please fill in the enclosed membership form and return it to us in the self-addressed envelope. Please include the envelope in which you received this newsletter. This will allow us to be sure who is returning the forms. If you need help to complete the form, please phone Bernard on 0121 525 2119.

## **Feedback please**

Are we meeting your needs? The editor would love to hear from you. Contact details below. Or pop your suggestions or questions in the enclosed envelope.

## **This issue—thanks to:**

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