



A Newsletter brought to you from Vision of Adventure

Happy New Year to Everyone.

We know that 2020 has been a difficult year for most people. More so for some, than others and our heartfelt condolences to all that have lost loved ones.

2021 doesn't seem to have got off to a good start either but let's hope the vaccine works and things start improving!

Funding

The Big Christmas Give

A Massive thank you to everyone who has helped with our first Big Give Christmas Challenge where we hit our target of raising £6000! Thank you to those who have donated (not just during the Challenge, but also at other times last year!). A big thanks to those who have featured in our posts and those who spread the word by liking and sharing. We are immensely grateful to our pledger and our Charity Champion (the Monday Charitable Trust) between them they have turned £3005 of donations into £6671 including gift aid. This gives us a great start into 2021 when we hope to be helping more visually impaired people experience the joys of adventure.

Other Funding

We were delighted to be chosen by the Staff at the Thomas Pocklington Trust to receive a donation of £1000 in November - this was a really nice surprise.

The Barchester Foundation and the Whirlwind Trust are both allowing us to carry over unspent funds from 2020. This means that we have funding in place to support residential courses as soon as they become possible. This is invaluable support as it will allow us to react really quickly as soon as restrictions allow.

We have also received support from the Lottery, Sport England and the Government to enable us to keep the Charity ticking over during this time. Without this we would struggle as there are still bills to pay, rent for the equipment store, insurance, some staff costs etc.

Staffing

We are sorry to say that Chris left us as Support Team Manager at the end of November. In the end, with, all the difficulties of remote working in a new position and trying to relocate during a pandemic the job just didn't work out for him. We thank him for all his hard work especially during the autumn courses and wish him and Grazia all the best in their new enterprises.

This of course means that we will need to appoint a new member of staff to manage our office, finances and all things admin. We will be advertising in due course on various employment sites as well as social media.

Staying Fit

Obviously, as Chris has departed, his planned fitness sessions will not be going ahead. Instead, Kath and Paddy Finn have put together a comprehensive online programme. Some of you will already know Kath and Paddy from our triathlon courses and events.

They, along with Carol Downing, an experienced yoga teacher, will be running interactive sessions including yoga, strength training and spin bike sessions. These sessions will be aimed at all levels and will cover general fitness as well as activity specific fitness (cycling, climbing etc).

There will be one session per week in each discipline. For yoga and strength training sessions you'll need an exercise mat or towel to do the sessions on and you may need a wall or a chair to help with any balance exercises. As the sessions progress it will be useful to have some weights although cans of beans will suffice. You will also need loose clothing. For the spin bike sessions you will need access to some kind of exercise bike or turbo trainer and you will need clothing that doesn't get caught on the bike. Drinks are also advisory.

These are interactive sessions on Zoom so you will be able to talk to each other and the coaches. The sessions are aimed at our current participants VI and guides.

More details including the schedule are on the VoA website. These will be repeated, together with the Zoom links, in the private Facebook group.

If you wish to take part but don't access the Facebook group please let me know and I will send the Zoom details directly.

Staying Connected

In these days of remote working, remote exercising and remote everything else, online meeting platforms have become important in many people's lives. As we said above we are going to be running the exercise sessions using Zoom. As those who have used Zoom before will know it's a useful tool once you get to grips with it.

We had a Zoom sing along on Christmas Day which was a lot of fun in that we had a chat and a laugh but fell down a bit on the singing due to technical problems! Thanks to everyone who joined in.

In order to facilitate the smooth running of the fitness sessions, Dave can help anyone who needs assistance getting started on Zoom. He has written a "how to guide" for those that are new to zoom which is attached at the end of this newsletter. If after working through that you are still struggling, drop us an email and Dave will arrange a time to help you in person (remotely). He's also happy to help for those that don't want to do the Exercises but would just like a hand with Zoom.

Activities

In common with everyone else, we have been watching all the predictions of what might happen with the pandemic and it's almost impossible to make any concrete plans for this year at the moment. We are hoping to be able to run some residential courses later in the year. Last year we proved that it is possible to put courses on at very short notice when there is a lull in restrictions. This may well be what happens again this year.

Private Courses

When restrictions allow we will be able to offer private day activities to small groups of up to 3 VI participants plus guides. Cost per group will be £200 per day. This covers transport on the day from your accommodation (as long as it is in Kendal), to the activity venue, instruction, kit and lunch. This is based on our usual venues for climbing, cycling, caving, swimming and canoeing. Availability of particular activities will be dependent on the level of restrictions in force at the time as well as availability of guides and, of course, weather.

This price is subsidised and is possible due to the generosity of the charitable trusts and grant giving bodies who are supporting us in these difficult times. Private courses booked in this way will be fully cancellable if circumstances relating to Covid 19 change between booking and course dates.

Swimming Tethers

Following the success of the swim guiding tethers that we used last year a few people have asked how to get one. We can make them up for people and send them out. A set consists of 2.8m of 8mm bungee with a plastic hook on each end and 2 webbing belts with flip open buckles. We are happy to pass them on at what they cost us to make, which is £10 per set. If you would like a set drop us a line, they will still be available later in the year when the water is warmer, so no hurry!

Meanwhile

Stay safe and hope to see you some time during the year – either on a zoom session or better still, on a course.

That's the end of the main newsletter. For those that want to know how to use zoom then carry on reading.

How to use Zoom

(This document is also available from the website's Help Menu)

Zoom is a free app where you can have a meeting with up to 99 others. In each meeting you can choose to share both audio and video. If you are shy or just having a bad hair day then you can just use the audio part of it.

It's very simple. And you can use Zoom on practically any device e.g. PC, Mac, Android or Apple Iphone, Tablet or Ipad.

If you've got a PC then just before the time of the meeting simply click on the link sent to you and it will either launch Zoom, or if you haven't got it installed then it will download it to your computer beforehand. It takes a couple of minutes to install and after you enter some first-time details, like agreeing to the Terms and Conditions, it'll open you in the meeting.

On Android or iOS, it's best if you pre-install the Zoom app from the Playstore or Apple Store. Again, by clicking on the supplied meeting link it will launch the app and give you access to the meeting.

The different apps have all got slightly different buttons that you may have to press to join the meeting but its' all straightforward and you should get into the meeting. I've written the remainder from the viewpoint of using a PC. The other platforms are broadly similar and have the same basic concepts.

Once you are at the meeting you'll usually be taken in to a holding area or Waiting Room. Here the meeting host will notice your arrival and admit you, but occasionally

they don't notice and you are just left waiting. This happens to sighted and VI people alike, but be patient, you'll eventually get admitted. The host can set the meeting up to automatically admit you which means you don't have to go into the Waiting Room. We'll do this for the forthcoming Exercise Classes.

Once admitted there is a short delay whilst the audio connection is established and a few seconds afterwards the video part kicks in.

The meeting host will notice your arrival and say Hi. It is as simple as that!

In terms of what is seen on the screen, the current speaker is shown in the largest window and the other attendees in smaller images around. This is known as Speaker View and is the default view. This is probably the best setting for those with some vision. The alternative, the Gallery View, is where everyone is displayed in equal sized but in smaller windows.

There are other various settings to make things more complicated but you don't have to go anywhere near them. Buttons exist to switch your camera off, switch your microphone off, share the contents of another window on your computer and even clap or raise a hand. The latter are more useful when people have their microphone switched off but still want to get the meeting hosts attention. It's probably worth exploring these and other things at a later date.

One useful tip is to not to talk at the same time as anyone else. Just like in any other meeting the more people talking at once the more chaotic it becomes.

Normally a zoom meeting lasts up to 15, 30, 45 or 60 minutes. You can have longer meetings if you pay for the app but sometimes Zoom automatically gives you a free time extension when you are approaching the scheduled end.

At the end you can choose to click the Leave button or the host can end the meeting for everyone. I'm not sure whether the app automatically closes or you have to exit it manually, but it's not difficult to get out and finish.

Zoom from a landline or mobile phone – without internet or an App.

It is possible to join a Zoom meeting using any type of phone and without internet. More details on the Help menu on the website.

Problems

Well, that's how it is meant to work and usually does. However, sometimes the technology doesn't quite work. Most of the problems seem to occur around the video not working but occasionally problems do occur in the audio. If you are stuck and don't know what to do, its best closing down the Zoom app and re-trying from

scratch. If you get completely stuck then just get in touch (preferably by email!) and I'll try to help you further. Similarly, if you want a one to one session to try it out then also get in touch.

Hope this helps

Dave