



# HULL & EAST RIDING GLAUCOMA GROUP

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Welcome to the Hull and East Riding Glaucoma Group Newsletter for June 2021, with apologies for such a long interval since the last one in November. Unfortunately a variety of health problems - fortunately not Covid- made compiling and producing one rather difficult.

**Group news:** Since last I wrote we have once again experienced the reintroduction and easing of both lockdown and shielding, with months of uncertainty, challenge, change and restrictions. Now however with the prospect of a return to normality with the lifting of all restrictions planned for June 21st, at the time of writing, Sight Support have indicated they are hoping to start hosting

meetings again. As such we are pleased to identify the possibility of being able to hold a meeting of the group. Having spoken to a selection of members, while very pleased indeed at the news, the general feeling is that we should play it safe and plan for a meeting in October at the earliest. The climate of uncertainty is still very much with us, both officially and personally as far as people's feelings regarding the ongoing developments and the effect on day to day lives. Having managed to keep Covid at bay by obeying the rules, many are determined not to throw caution to the wind, and still feel vulnerable, with the need to feel safe if they go anywhere which involves mixing with numbers of people, even

though vaccination provides a welcoming reassurance. An October meeting would allow not just time to see what the summer might bring, and for the easing back into 'normal' life - what ever that might be. It would also allow time to react to changing circumstances. i.e. although restrictions are planned to be lifted on 21st June, this is subject to change and this timing would hopefully prevent a repeat of the situation of having to cancel meetings and speakers. It would also allow time for me to get my hair and wardrobe up to scratch and appropriate for a public appearance!!

**The meeting:** All being well this will be on Friday 8th October at Sight Support at the usual time of 11am. Given the continuing uncertainty however I have to stress that all arrangements are tentative and might change. It very much depends on what happens over the next few months, Hopefully it will be possible to confirm arrangements nearer the time.

As far as the meeting itself is concerned this will be along the lines of an informal welcome back get together, rather than formal with a speaker. As Sight Support are not just our hosts accommodation wise, but a very much appreciated support mechanism for many of our members and the group itself, they will be on hand to welcome us back and identify how they've functioned throughout the pandemic and the support they continue to offer. The informal nature of the meeting should also allow us to share our stories, and problems experienced, e.g. dealing with the practical problems of life and ongoing health concerns alongside the threat of the pandemic itself; what's helped, and even more important - who has provided answers and support. Just after being diagnosed with heart failure my GP told me I needed to work at getting some joy into my life, so it will be interesting to hear also how you've brought joy into your life and how you've stayed positive

and motivated in spite of the pandemic.

**Future Meetings** At the moment the hope is that if the October meeting goes ahead successfully as planned we will then be able to plan for our usual Christmas buffet in December, and also organise a programme of meetings for 2022.

**Other news:** Those of you who get the Hull Daily Mail and also watch Look North may have spotted a familiar face in April. Martha, who has supported us over the years at our meetings with hand made bags for sale made the news when united with volunteers from the Bransholme Chat Initiative.(Back to Ours). Although not in person it was lovely to see her on screen and in the paper, and hear about the kindness of strangers.

**Eye Hospital** From what I can gather clinics are being held but numbers are dependent on not overfilling the waiting room and maintaining social distancing, with weekend work going on to try to reduce the waiting lists. A new glaucoma

consultant -Mrs Bhatnagar - started just about the time of the first lockdown. Also in September last year a fully integrated refractive laser eye surgery suite for NHS patients undergoing cataract procedures and corneal surgery was launched at the hospital. Funded by Dr Assem Allam - local businessman and philanthropist, and reputed to be the fastest laser of its kind, it enables surgery to be done more quickly, benefiting both the patient and the hospital. Regarding the Eye Clinic nurse advice number I included in the last newsletter, personal experience of the system identifies that if called in for examination, as all now work on the same Medisoft system for reporting, the glaucoma staff should see what information has been recorded so if anything relevant to glaucoma is identified an appropriate appointment would be made.

**Some observations.** It's possible to identify how before the pandemic we all had our hopes and dreams as well as plans for the future. However the

pandemic has resulted in life being put on hold for an indefinite period of time and certainly 2020 seems to have gone past in a blur. In spite of roadmaps and government announcements we don't know when we are going to be back to normal and at the moment it can be difficult to establish exactly what that means. e.g we've personally settled into a rather boring tedious routine, and find that we actually get quite annoyed when something happens which means it's interrupted. Also although appreciating the protection afforded by the vaccine we haven't yet accepted the premise that it makes us invincible. Rather we are working at taking calculated risks rather than being rash. Also unfortunately it hasn't waved a magic wand giving us back our youthful strength, vigour and energy, so many things we would like to do are as much out of reach as they were before the pandemic, and make staying positive and motivated quite difficult at times. Perhaps as well as

keeping ourselves busy we need to make ourselves happy and work at finding things to make us smile. With that in mind (!) : A teddy bear is working on a building site. He goes for a tea break and when he returns he notices his pick has been stolen. The bear is angry and reports the theft to the foreman. The foreman grins at the bear and says: "Oh, I forgot to tell you, today's the day the teddy bears have their picks nicked."

We look forward to seeing you again and hearing your questions and stories. All have a tale to tell. "The shoe that fits one person pinches another and there is no recipe for living that suits all cases". Carl Jung

As always if at any time you wish to stop receiving the Newsletter and have your name removed from the mailing list all that is necessary is for you to phone Sight Support and ask for your details to be removed (01482 342297) Take care and keep safe. Kay Slingsby

