

DIGITAL INCLUSION ACTIVITIES

In response to the coronavirus pandemic SASBAH needed to find new ways of combating social isolation, both for those who previously used to join in our range of face to face social activities and those who are at risk of becoming increasingly isolated.

A wide range of activities are now being delivered using Zoom. SASBAH'S monthly E News, website and Facebook page are used to raise awareness of the sessions on offer with a monthly calendar typically including the following:

WEEKLY

- **Coffee & Chat**

a chance for an informal catch up with SASBAH'S Adviser.

- **Quiz**

always popular with a wide range of ages competing.

- **Bingo**

as many as 30 participate regularly.

- **Virtual Advisers**

an opportunity to raise any issues of concern, either for group discussion or to be taken forward on a confidential advice basis.

- **Art Class**

where funding allows, all materials are supplied and delivered to participants who have found this really therapeutic and an absorbing pastime for lockdown.

- **Chill Out with Music**

a chance to connect with others whilst unwinding.

- **Exercise Class**

suitable for wheelchair users.

- **Sessions for members**

of our Bourne Free disabilities social group. As well as a wide variety of engaging social activities, ranging from Karaoke to Photo Memories and Games Nights, there is a fortnightly "Swoove" – Sing It, Whoop It, Move It, Swoove It - led by a trained Swoove Fitness instructor.

MONTHLY

- **Family Group**

to help those with young families keep in touch for mutual support.

- **Wellbeing Group**

covering exercise sessions, mindfulness, dietary advice and much more.

- **Games Group**

an informal and engaging session playing games for all abilities, which might include Pictionary, Hangman, Who Am I? All helping to build confidence to communicate through digital media.

- **Craft Group**

simple but effective crafts for all abilities. Our service users are encouraged to share their ideas and lead sessions demonstrating their favourite things to make.

- **Hobby group**

another sharing group for building confidence in telling others all about a favourite hobby or pastime.

- **SASBAH Speakers**

we are booking a wide range of expert speakers covering subjects particularly relevant to our service users. "Top tips for better mental health" and Hate Crime are two examples.

Here's what some of our service users have been saying about their involvement in the new Zoom sessions:

- *I've enjoyed all on offer, it's a godsend.*
- *Thank you for a lovely Zoom call today - really enjoyed it and clearly so did all the other people absolutely brilliant idea bringing people together.*
- *Modern technology can be really scary to some people but as zoom is likely to be our only way of being a group for some time then I really want to encourage anyone to join that might be hesitant. You are all lovely people and I feel so happy to be part of such a great group of new friends – thank you x*



ZOE'S STORY

Zoe is 34 years old and lives independently in Crawley. She has spina bifida, hydrocephalus, cerebral palsy and is registered blind. She's a full-time wheelchair user. She's also a GB record holder for breast stroke and would probably have been in the last Paralympic games if she hadn't been in hospital having a shunt revision. Zoe is a keen swimmer and crafter and keeping fit and healthy is important to her.



going on to encourage others who were a bit nervous about taking part. She now co-hosts a regular craft group and has been able to make new supportive friendships within the groups. In the wellbeing sessions Zoe also shares information about accessible fitness regimes and a healthy lifestyle.

Zoe regularly joins a variety of SASBAH's Zoom meetings and says, "It's just nice having a friendly face. I find them useful. It's something to do when you can't get out and socialise. Because I'm a social person I think I'd have been quite lonely."

Because of her complex care needs, Zoe relies on support from carers, friends, family members and people within the swimming and crafting communities to meet her needs. Restrictions during the pandemic have meant that family and friends haven't been able to continue their support and her access to fitness facilities has been vastly reduced. She no longer feels safe on public transport and has had to spend nearly all her time at home. Zoe was introduced to online groups by her crafting friends and joined SASBAH's groups with ease,

Even after restrictions are lifted, Zoe says she would like the online sessions to continue. "Yes. I haven't been on public transport since March (2020). Because of changes in my vision I'm unsure about the future and whether I'll be able to use it."

"It's difficult to make social arrangements with my family due to changes in rules, so online contact is useful. It was nice to have someone to talk to on my Birthday."

Below is a screen shot from one of the craft sessions led by "Zoe from under the sea" – creating colour and pattern using different coloured tissue paper and water.

