



News from our group members 😊



We've **welcomed** lots of **new people** and familiar faces to our **Zoom meetings**. We always have a **laugh** [especially when **Mr Bill** arrives with a **funny hat** on!]



Several people are **chatting by phone**. Our wonderful volunteers, **Ian** and **Lyndsey**, are happy to **chat** on the **phone**.



Some of us have **met up** face to face [outside **at a pub** usually!]



Our **Zoom Creative aRt** has **started!** We're creating a cartoon together. It's **great fun!**

Charity News 📄



Joseph's Railway Club in Exeter has **raised** a £1,100 from a raffle. **BIG thank you** Joseph.



Sandhy has been making things happen! **Living with Aphasia** was the **chosen charity** for the **WOOHOO! Exmouth Art**, and at the event at **Powderham Castle**. Our **"Lifejacket"** was on **display** - what fantastic **awareness** for us!



Our **website** is going to have a **makeover** thanks to a **Covid grant**. It will have a **friendly aphasia site** with **people's stories**, a **gallery** plus loads of information for **people who live with aphasia**.



Our **superstars**, **Sandhy** and **Em**, have **increased** our **engagement** and **numbers** during lockdown by **Instagram**, **Twitter** and **Facebook**. And kept everyone **updated** with all our **activities**. Hurrah!



We're joining in with the **Stroke Association Virtual Conference for Leaders of Affiliated Stroke Groups**.

We love to **share our stories** and **tips** about living with **aphasia**.

Thanks **Liz and Keith** for providing our **first one!**

My Story

1. What happened to you?

In **December 2018** I had a **stroke** on my **right side**.

2. How did this affect you physically and mentally?

I was in **hospital** for **2 weeks**, **Exeter** and then **Plymouth** hospitals.

Physically my **right arm**, and **leg** were **affected**, and it affected my **walking** – it's been especially difficult as I am right handed. **Mentally** I feel my **brain** is much **slower** than it was. I **can read** but I am **much, much slower** than I was. I **can't think** of things **spontaneously**.

3. Did you get support outside of your immediate family?

Yes, I had help from the **Stroke Support team** and **learnt** how to **walk, wash** and **everything**. I had a speech and **language therapist** who was **very good** too. I feel it **wasn't enough** and it **could all have gone on longer**. Every day I walked a bit further – when I first started I could only do a **few steps** and **every day I walked a bit more** – 2, then 4 then **8 paces!**

4. How have your family and friends reacted to what's happened to you?

Keith, my **husband** has been **very, very good** and still is.

5. Were you aware before of 'Aphasia'?

No! Not until the speech and language **therapist mentioned it** - I'd **never heard of it!**

6. How has 'Aphasia' affected you?

I wish it hadn't happened. I feel **different physically and mentally** since the stroke. It's **difficult** to **motivate myself** to anything - even the **smallest thing** like picking up the phone to make a call or going out is hard now – I was **always an active person**.

7. COVID 19; how has this impacted on your life?

I wish it hadn't happened because I was going out a lot and contacting people. It's **making** me **feel frightened** and **anxious** about **everything**. I'm **contacting fewer people** than before and I haven't had anyone in the house. **Covid** affects people like me more – **vulnerable** and older people and I feel sorry for other people. I feel sorry for the front line staff too.

8. Has 'Living with Aphasia' charity helped you?

Yes definitely. It's been good to **compare** how **other people** are doing and to see what's going on for other people and how they are **getting on**. It's good to **talk** to other **people** who have had a **stroke** or **brain damage**. I really enjoyed the **Drop In** and especially the **Singing!** I really miss that now. The **Drop In** and groups are good and I would encourage anyone with **aphasia** to go. I've **noticed a difference** with people's **talking** since they've come along.

Keith comes along to the groups too – he says, "Coming to the groups **gives me support** as well – we hadn't heard of **aphasia** before the stroke support team talked about it. I've made new friendships and I've enjoyed chatting with everyone including husbands, wives and other people who live with someone who has aphasia. I can give a bit back now.

9. Do you have a positive message to give to people with Aphasia?

My **message** to **others** is that **it takes a lot longer than you think!** My sense of **humour** has **kept** me going too and I **laugh more!**

Liz and Keith