

Essex Blind Charity



Spotlight

April/May 2020

ISSUE 95

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Please send your articles for inclusion in Spotlight to:

The Editor

Essex Sight

40 Osborne Street

Colchester

CO2 7DB

01206 548196

Email: services@essexsight.org.uk

Items for the next issue should reach the Editor by 4th May



The Editor writes:

Welcome to the April/May edition of Spotlight. Well, my call went out and you answered! Thankyou to everyone who has submitted articles, tips, reviews and links to newsworthy pieces. This has been great as the regular articles on theatre and events has been cut short due to the widespread closures of public places due to government advice following the spread of Coronavirus.

Hopefully during this difficult time, the information and links within Spotlight will help to keep you occupied. The main thing is to stay safe and well and avoid all unnecessary contact with other people.

We hope you will find the articles informative and of interest. Please feel free to share Spotlight with other visually impaired people and their carers. Everyone who is newly registered in Essex will receive a copy of Spotlight and they can request their own copy in large print format, memory stick or by email. Unfortunately, we are unable to provide Braille copies.

I hope you will all continue to send your contributions, as your stories and experiences make Spotlight of interest to everyone. You can email articles to services@essexsight.org.uk

Editor

Community Support Team by Jonathan Dixon

Just as all our preparations for our Centenary were coming together, we have been hit by the Coronavirus. Following guidance from the Government and the World Health Organisation and in order to keep you and ourselves safe and reduce unnecessary contact, we have had to suspend all face to face contact, events and activities. We will still be manning phones and online activity, but we won't be opening sight centres to the public or visiting eye clinics. It is also likely that the events we were planning to hold or planning to attend may well be cancelled. This is unprecedented and we don't know how long the closures will be in place but keep in touch with us and as soon as we know, we will let you know. The main thing is to stay safe.

Bradwell B Nuclear Power Station Project Consultation

I have been sent details of the Bradwell B Nuclear Power Station project consultation. As all their public consultation events have been cancelled, I thought I would share details here to allow you find out about it and to give you the opportunity to have your say. The Bradwell B site was designated by the government in 2011 as being potentially suitable for Nuclear New Build. Although still early days, the developers want to share their initial proposals for a twin reactor power station, able to generate enough low carbon electricity to power around 4 million homes. Thousands of jobs will be created during construction, whilst the operating power station will provide hundreds of jobs for at least 60 years. The developers expect the local and regional economy to benefit, with significant opportunities for the local supply chain.

The UK urgently needs new investment in energy infrastructure to replace old, fossil fuel-based electricity generation sources. Since 2010, 26 power stations have closed, which equates to 20% of the UK's generation capacity. By the end of the decade, a further 35% of existing generation capacity will close, and so decisive action must be taken now.

Whilst solar, wind and other renewable energy sources will play an important part in meeting the government's goal of net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050, nuclear energy will be vital in meeting the National Grid's baseline energy needs.

You can find out more information about the project and give feedback through the following:

Website: www.bradwellb.co.uk **Email:** feedback@bradwellb.co.uk

Post: FREEPOST Bradwell B Consultation

The deadline for responding to the Stage 1 consultation is 11.59pm on Wednesday 27th May 2020. After this date, feedback received will be used to shape proposals before further consultation in the years to come.

If you have any questions about the emerging proposals, please contact:

Email: feedback@bradwellb.co.uk Phone: 01621 451 451

County News with Carol

After what seems like months and months of rain, as I write this, there are blue skies and sunshine which makes it very cheerful in the office (written prior to the current Coronavirus situation – Ed).

Colchester Resource Centre

I seem to be spending less and less time in the Resource Centre as I am out and about across Essex. The Tuesday coffee morning has been popular with both our "regulars" and newcomers and our friendly and knowledgeable volunteers are on hand to answer any questions you might have. In March, we had a very interesting talk from the East Anglian Sailing Trust. EAST are a charity who organise sailing trips for the visually impaired. They hold taster sessions and weekend trips where you sleep on the boat and get to sail it too. If you would like more information, please contact EAST on 0333 088 3278 or visit their website <https://www.east-anglian-sailing-trust.org.uk/>

Marilyn Peck from the Colchester Society for the Blind has been in touch with us and asked us to spread the word that their phone has been disconnected and the telephone number has been changed to 01206 510870 with immediate effect.

Brentwood

It was with a little tear in my eye that, after eleven years, we held our final Sight Centre in Brentwood Library in March. Over the last few years, attendance has declined, so the decision was made to seek new pastures. The audio book group that takes place on the second Monday of the month from 1.30pm until 2.30pm will continue to run with the support of the staff at the library. I would like to say a big thank you to all the staff at Brentwood Library for their help and support over the past eleven years.

We are not leaving Brentwood as our new, twice monthly service, is in Brentwood Community Hospital. We have an information desk in the main reception area where anyone can come and chat to us about sight loss or low vision. The sessions take place on the first Tuesday of the month from 10am - 2pm and the last Thursday of the month from 1pm - 4pm.

We have also attended a couple of community coffee mornings in the outlying villages which has enabled to reach people who would not otherwise be able to get to us. We hope to be at more of these events later in the year, so keep checking to see if we will be near you and don't forget, we are still happy to visit you at home should this be required.

Spotlight On

Graham tells us all about his trip to Naples with Seable Holidays.

I have recently been on another great Seable trip yet again to visit another part of Italy. After experiencing both Rome and Sicily, I was offered the chance to go to Naples, a city in southern Italy that sits on the Bay of Naples. Nearby is Mount Vesuvius, the still-active volcano that destroyed the nearby Roman town of Pompeii. Dating to the 2nd millennium B.C., Naples has centuries of important art and architecture. The city's cathedral, the Duomo di San Gennaro, is filled with frescoes. Other major landmarks include the lavish Royal Palace and Castel Nuovo, a 13th-century castle. As part of this holiday we visited some of these amazing places. To get to various parts of Naples City Centre we had to travel using the Metro.

The Metro is very much like the London Underground but a lot less busy. Each station we stopped at had different kinds of themes. One in particular was all different art works of bright colours featuring mirrors where you can see great reflections of the artwork collages. Each station had different music playing in the background for people whilst waiting, much better than hearing announcement and more noise like the London Underground. We used the Metro several times on this trip to get to various parts of Naples then worked our way back throughout the day.

There was a great experience going underground into Fontanelle Cemetery Caves to see, feel, and touch some skulls from the plague of 1656. These were united by a cult dedicated to caring for the ancient dead. To read more into the history of the caves visit the following link. <https://www.atlasobscura.com/places/fontanelle-cemetery-caves>

Naples has a labyrinth of ancient tunnels hidden below the city holding the ruins of 2,500 years of history. We were able to go underground and explore what was formed by the Greeks in the fourth century BC to build Neapolis, or New City. The group were able to go underground and explore Napoli Sotterranea what was once used as an air raid shelter during the second world war. Some of these tunnels were very narrow and there was just about room for one person. More information about the

underground can be found here

<https://www.atlasobscura.com/places/naples-underground>

Pompeii is a vast archaeological site in southern Italy's Campania region, near the coast of the Bay of Naples. Once a thriving and sophisticated Roman city, Pompeii was buried under meters of ash and pumice after the catastrophic eruption of Mount Vesuvius in 79 A.D. The preserved site features excavated ruins of streets and houses that visitors can freely explore.

This tour and Mount Vesuvius were the two places I was looking forward to visiting most of all on this holiday. On our tour of Pompeii, we had a very nice local guide Lello, we were all able to understand his explanations of different parts of the tour as we went around exploring the ruins. Lello spoke very clear English and was a fantastic guide for this tour. Lello talked us through various historic parts of Pompeii and explained it in detail, allowing us to feel parts of the ruins in various places throughout the tour. We finished this great tour in the amphitheatre where outdoor live events took place. Lello got us all to stand in the middle one by one facing one way and to say something out loud then turn around and do the same again this was to show us how sound travelled throughout the Amphitheatre. This great tour finished with a group photo of us all sitting in the Amphitheatre.

I was really looking forward to visiting Mount Vesuvius and the experience was just great. After going up Mount Etna in Sicily twice, I was looking forward to experiencing another volcano. Vesuvius is the most famous active volcano in mainland Europe and has produced some of the continent's largest volcanic eruptions. Vesuvius is located the west coast of Italy, overlooking the Bay and City of Naples and sits in the crater of the ancient Somma volcano.

Vesuvius is most famous for the 79 AD eruption which destroyed the Roman cities of Pompeii and Herculaneum. Though the volcano's last eruption was in 1944, it still represents a great danger to the cities that surround it, especially the busy metropolis of Naples.

Part of this holiday included a nice morning tour and experience trip up this great mountain where we were able to walk quite high up into the mountain overlooking the whole of Naples. We could even see the Volcano erupting. We took a group photo with this in the background where you could see all the smoke. This was all in all a great tour and we were all very tired after all the walking.

Sight Centre Activities

Weekly

Colchester

Tuesdays	10 – 12pm	Coffee Morning
Thursdays	By appointment	iPad/iPhone sessions
Monday – Friday	By appointment	Document Reading

Clacton

Thursdays	1 – 3pm	Social
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Chelmsford

Friday	10 – 1pm	Information and Advice
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Brentwood Community Hospital

First Tuesday	10am – 2pm	Information and Advice
Last Thursday	1pm – 4pm	

Maldon

First Tuesday of month	10 - 1pm	Information and Advice
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Events

Please check with us to keep up to date on events as many are currently being cancelled or rescheduled in these uncertain times.

However, **Vision England** are still planning to run their residential courses, albeit, starting later in the year. Here's the latest from them:

Residentials - 18-24 Year olds with Vision Impairment

Build your confidence and independence, learn new skills, have fun and make new friends.

Vision England is an exciting residential programme for young people with vision impairment in the UK, in partnership with the Field Studies Council (FSC). Young people are supported to play a leading role in changing their communities and the environment for the better.

Activities may include conservation activities like coppicing and tree planting, and other activities like wildlife walks, bush craft, hiking and camping and lots of social activities!

The residentials currently planned to commence at the end of July onwards are still going ahead at the time of print.

For more information: 07816 599 260 or visionengland@sense.org.uk
How to apply: online at www.sense.org.uk/visionengland

Quiz

Test your general knowledge

1. What sugar is found in milk?
2. Where would you wear espadrilles?
3. In which French city would you find the artist quarter known as Montmartre?
4. What is a fandango?
5. Who real name was Marion Morrison?
6. Which car manufacturer produces the Lancer and Shogun models?
7. Who had a hit duetting on 'Dead Ringer For Love' with Cher?
8. Which word can go after tape, ring and round?
9. The Rialto Bridge is a popular tourist attraction in which city?
10. What name has been given to the ancient army made from baked earth that was discovered in China?
11. Which Australian cricketer used an aluminium bat in a test match in 1979?
12. Si and Am are the two Siamese cats in which Disney film?
13. The 'Pinna' is the outer part of your what?
14. The name of which toy translates as "come come?"
15. Too-Too, Dab-Dab and Chee-Chee were in which film?
16. The song title "Go West" has been a hit for which two bands?

Equipment and Technology

RNIB approved Credit Card

NatWest has launched the first credit card in the UK which is designed for blind and partially sighted people. The cards have a notch cut out on the right-hand side to help customers insert them into ATMs and PIN pads the right way. The reverse of the card has also been adapted to the needs of partially sighted, with the telephone numbers placed where no embossing will be, and the font increased by more than 50 per cent to make it easier to read.

The new cards will also have tactile markings to help customers identify them in their wallet. This feature is the same as on the RNIB-accredited debit and savings account cards which NatWest introduced in 2015, and different markings on each card will allow customers to tell which card is which.

All other features of the card remain the same – it can be used in ATMs, at point of sale and for contactless transactions at home or abroad. The cards can be ordered in all NatWest branches, online or through telephone banking and will be issued within 48 hours.

Les Matheson, CEO of Personal and Business Banking at NatWest, said: “Almost two million people in the UK are living with sight loss, but we think making payments and accessing cash should be as easy as possible for everyone. We have worked closely with RNIB and are very proud to have introduced the first credit card which is ‘RNIB approved’ – adding to our RNIB approved debit and savings cards and the first RNIB approved app.”

New and improved RNIB Reading Services online library

RNIB has launched a new and improved RNIB Reading Services online library, which replaces the Overdrive service. You can start using it for free straight away by signing up at <https://readingservices.rnib.org.uk/>

So, what's new?

As well as being able to download RNIB's Talking Books, there are lots of new features for you to enjoy:

1. You no longer need to renew your books; you can download and keep them until you're finished.
2. Talking Books are available to download in DAISY format and will work on DAISY players. So, you can enjoy higher audio quality, as well as any useful navigation included in the book.
3. You can read eBraille books. This ground-breaking new format is in response to feedback from book lovers who read braille. You can download braille books and read them on an electronic braille display, like the Orbit Reader 20.

This new exciting service can be used on a range of platforms including Windows, iOS and Android on a range of media players and applications specially designed for reading books. These include Windows Media player, VLC media player on a desktop or laptop PC and by using the Dolphin EasyReader on your iPhone, iPad, iPod or any Android device.

Details on how to download the EasyReader application for your device can be found by going to <https://yourdolphin.com/en-gb/products/individuals/easyreader-app>

If you have any questions you can email readingservices@rnib.org.uk or call 0303 123 9999.

App, App and Away!

At a recent meeting, Siobhan Meade who is the Engagement Officer for Guide Dogs for the Blind Association covering the South East, told us about some of her favourite apps. Here they are:

Lazarillo is a specialized GPS app for the blind and visually impaired people. Using audio messages, Lazarillo will tell you about nearby places, the street you are walking on, street intersections in your way and more! Like a radio, Lazarillo will announce the places around you while you move. This app was designed and implemented with active feedback from blind people.

The GPS resource is used even if the App is in the background. This allows the user to keep using the app without active usage of the screen, so that they can still enjoy the features of Lazarillo even when their phone is in their pocket or when using other relevant apps, however continued use of GPS can dramatically decrease battery life!

This app allows you to use its accessibility functions for free, it just requires mobile data or a Wi-Fi connection.

The app contains the following features:

- Exploration: Provides your actual position, nearby places, and street intersections while you are walking on the street, in a bus or by car.
- Category searches: Allows you to find nearby places from a specific category such as banks, health, food, shop, art, entertainment, etc.
- Specific searches: Allows you to find a route to any place using voice or keyboard.

Lazarillo also provides information about establishments that work with blind or visually impaired people. The app is linked to a web platform where the institutions are able to show important information about events, courses, workshops, or any other services that a blind person may need.

Clew is an indoor, path tracing navigation app built for blind and visually impaired users. It is designed to remember a location like a seat or a room and assist you to return to that destination after exploring your surrounding environment. This free app is compatible with iPhone 6s and newer models running iOS11 and is great for finding your way back in unfamiliar buildings.

To use Clew, you must ensure that the camera in your device is fully capturing your surroundings. The best way to do this is to hold the phone in a vertical portrait position with the camera facing away from you and make sure the camera is stable to ensure accurate location tracking. Clew works best in well-lit areas with distinct visual features and few moving objects like crowds and cars. Although Clew can be used outdoors, it is not as accurate in open areas and intense sunlight. Clew works optimally indoors over relatively short distances.

You can pause Clew once you arrive at your destination and before you start navigating back. Press the pause button on the bottom right corner and follow the instructions. Once Clew is paused, you can exit the app to do other tasks or lock the phone if you don't shut down Clew from the app switcher. When you are ready to return, press the resume button and follow the instructions to start tracking.

Welcome by Neatebox

Welcome addresses the issue of inadequate customer service for visitors with specific accessibility requirements caused by a lack of disability awareness and confidence of staff members.

This free app allows you to request visits to participating venues, indicating the areas you need customer service to have awareness of and the specific assistance you require. Venues are notified of the visit request and receive an overview of your condition and top tips to aid their interaction with you.

The aim is to facilitate the communication between customers and customer service staff to create long-lasting and mutually respectful relationships.

Button by Neatebox

The Button App provides an alternative to the traditional button push at pedestrian crossing boxes. Over 10% of the UK population (6.5 Million) have mobility impairments that could result in an inability to press or even find pedestrian crossing boxes and cross safely.

With Button, the user can press the pedestrian crossing button with their phones or smart watches. This allows the user to focus on positioning and alignment ensuring a safe crossing. It is a new app and is still developing. Currently the only enabled crossings are in Scotland, but they will spread throughout the country as they get requests in. If you want a crossing enabled you need to request it via their website <https://www.neatebox.com/button-crossings>

Users can put the button press on an automatic loop to allow them to activate crossings while leaving their devices in their pocket.

Users will start to cross from the edge of the pavement being perfectly aligned for a safe crossing. This will give them effectively more time to cross.

The next update of the app will allow for users to activate the audible signal when they cross, which will be particularly useful for those with visual impairments.

The system collects usage data with every interaction which can be used for the provision of more efficient traffic management and infrastructure planning.

British Blind Sport Activity Finder – a review by Darren

Following a Spotlight article in the last issue and being a keen runner, I decided to try the British Blind Sport activity finder tool.

The first point to note about the BBS tool, is that it can be accessed using JAWS. However, the listed activities are somewhat overstated. Many of the activities have no representation throughout the whole of the UK. I entered two different postcodes separately into the tool and adjusted the distance parameter to the maximum distance of one thousand miles for each, and it found no listings for several of the activities. In addition, when I selected cricket as an activity of interest and selected 'South East' as the regional parameter, it found three clubs in Kent. That is great, but if I then adjusted the region to 'East of England' and keep the distance parameter at one thousand miles, the tool finds no cricket clubs. So, this is a matter of defining parameters for BBS.

Obviously, the tool is in its infancy, but it does lend itself to users referring it to known clubs who can provide relevant services to build the portfolio. Consequently, I will be forwarding the link to the East Anglian Sailing Trust for inclusion on the currently empty sailing listing. Another inconsistency I noted, was the lack of area or postcode labelling on the results list and accompanying map. The user must click into a listed club in the results list to discover the club's whereabouts. This format is not consistent nor efficient; some clubs do have an instant area or postcode identification in the results list following a search. Never-the-less, the tool is a good idea and builds on the BBS 'Find a Guide' search tool for prospective runners.

Let's hope that clubs and sports associations update the tool as it's the only way for this tool to develop.

<https://britishblindsport.org.uk/activity-finder/>

Entertainment

Theatres (audio described performance), Museum, arts and Heritage

Vocal Eyes have a national listing of Audio Descriptive performances. At the time of writing, theatres, museums and many other public entertainment centres are closed. Check with venues and Vocal eyes as to when performances will resume.

Tel. 020 7375 1043

Email enquiries@vocaleyeyes.co.uk

Readers Top Tips

Following the Editors plea in the last issue, we have had some top tips come in.

Fiona Langstone has recommended Richard's Taxis (Chelmsford Area). Fiona has used Richard for many years now and he is very reliable.

Fiona says 'He is happy to go to a person's front door and let them know he is outside and is more than happy to take guide dogs. His car is nice and clean and he will go anywhere, so it doesn't matter where you want to go, although obviously being a one-man band the earlier you book the better it is as he does get very busy. You can contact Richard on his mobile 07538 899717, but please be aware that he may be driving and not able to take your call straight away. He does however phone people back. I know how difficult it is to get a taxi service that is reliable if you cannot see, so I hope this will help other people'.

Answers to quiz

- 1 Lactose
- 2 Feet
- 3 Paris
- 4 Dance
- 5 John Wayne
- 6 Mitsubishi
- 7 Meatloaf
- 8 Worm
- 9 Venice
- 10 The Terracotta Army
- 11 Dennis Lillie
- 12 Lady and the Tramp
- 13 Ear
- 14 Yo
- 15 Dr. Dolittle
- 16 The Village People / Pet Shop Boys

Contact details

Helpline and office 01206 548196
(Jonathan Dixon, Carol Massey, Christine Pratt, Denise Sanders and Steve Massey)

Eye Clinic Liaison Officers 01206 548196
Christine & Denise (Colchester + Tendring hospitals)

Read House 01255 673654
(Janet Plant, General Manager, Tina Cox, Admin Assistant)

Read House is the residential care home run by Essex Blind Charity in Frinton on Sea. The home specialises in the care of elderly people with sight problems. We offer permanent and respite care (short breaks) by staff who have all been trained in visual awareness. The Home is situated on the seafront at Frinton on Sea, a short distance from the town Centre with its friendly local shops.

If you would like to find out more about Read House, receive an Information Pack or arrange to be shown around, please contact Janet or Tina.

How you can support us

Essex Blind Charity produces and distributes Spotlight free of charge. However, donations in time or money are always welcome. If you are a UK taxpayer please consider filling in our gift aid form so we can claim back the tax paid on your donation, thereby allowing us to make even better use of your donation.

If you are writing or redrafting your will please consider leaving us a gift. Your support will enable us to continue to provide and develop the services we provide for people with sight loss throughout Essex. Thank you.

Gift Aid Declaration

**On behalf of Essex Blind Charity
Registered Charity No. 1103732**

The Gift Aid Scheme enables charities to make more of your donation by reclaiming the tax you have already paid. In order for us to make this claim on your donation(s) please complete this form and return it as soon as possible

Thank you!

Please treat the enclosed gift of £.....as a Gift Aid donation.

I confirm that I have paid or will pay an amount of Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax for the current tax year (6 April to 5 April) that is at least equal to the amount of tax that all charities and Community Amateur Sports Clubs that I donate to will reclaim on my gifts for the current tax year. I understand that other taxes such as VAT and Council Tax do not qualify. I understand the charity will reclaim 25p of tax on every £1 that I have given.

Title.....Forename(s).....Surname.....

Address.....

.....

.....

Post Code.....

I would like Essex Blind Charity to treat all donations I have made since 1 July 2012 as Gift Aid donations until I notify them otherwise.

Signature..... Date.....

Please return your completed form to:
Essex Blind Charity
Read House, 23 The Esplanade
Frinton on Sea, Essex CO13 9AU.

Are you on our mailing list?

If you are not already on our mailing list for 'Spotlight' and would like to receive a regular copy, please complete the form below and return it to Carol Massey at Essex Sight, 40 Osborne Street, Colchester CO2 7DB

Name.....

Address.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

Tel.....

How would you prefer to receive your copy?

Large Print..... Memory Stick.....Email.....

We would like to add your contact details to our database so that we may from time to time send you details of developments to our services, events taking place in your area and other information we feel may be of interest to you.

If you would prefer us not to do so, please tick here.....

We will not pass your details to anyone else without your permission.

You may request us to remove your details from our database at any time.

Useful Telephone Numbers

Colchester Eye Clinic contact numbers

To book or change a NEW appointment only
01206 286870 / 286871 / 286872

To enquire about or change a date for SURGERY only
01206 286874 / 286875

To book or change a FOLLOW UP appointment only
01206 286860 – Mr Sheldrick and Mr Mukherjee
01206 286863 – Mr Patel and Mr Bansal
01206 286856 – Mr Dimitriou
01206 286769 – Mrs Shenoy

For any enquiry relating to Secondary Optometry
01206 286868

For any enquiry relating to Orthoptics
01206 286866

For the EMERGENCY EYE CLINIC only
01206 286882 – we do not accept self-referrals unless the patient is already under our care or has a pink card for the same condition.

If anyone would like to contact the department by email the address is chu-otr.ophtalmologydepartment@nhs.net

Essex Sight Centres

Brentwood

Brentwood Community Hospital
Crescent Drive
Shenfield CM15 8DR
1st Tuesday of month 10am-1pm
Last Thursday of month 1pm-4pm

Chelmsford

Chelmsford Library
Market Road
Chelmsford CM1 1LH
Every Friday 10 am to 1 pm

Clacton-on-Sea

CADOWs
Old Road
Clacton on Sea
CO15 1HX
Every Thursday 1 pm to 3.30 pm

Colchester

40 Osborne Street
Colchester
CO2 7DB
Open Mon - Fri 10 am to 2 pm
Wednesday late opening to 4pm

Frinton on Sea

Read House
23 The Esplanade
Frinton-on-Sea CO13 9AU
Mon-Fri 1pm - 4.30pm (by
appointment tel: 01255 673654)

Maldon

Maldon Library, Carmelite House
White Horse Lane
Maldon CM9 5FW
1st Tuesday of each month
10am-1pm

For more information contact Essex Sight Office on 01206 548196.

Email: services@essexsight.co.uk

For information about permanent or respite residential care, contact:

General Manager at Read House, Janet Plant: on 01255 673654

Email: janet@essexblind.co.uk