

Step Forward Success!

Ashley, a service user on the Step Forward programme, has done some brilliant work recently.

With our support, he has taken part in two virtual meetings. The first meeting was with the House of Lords Covid-19 committee, where Ashley spoke about the future after Covid and, in particular, employment. The second meeting was with Justin Tomlinson, the Minister for Disabled People, Health and Work. In this meeting, Ashley asked about the Access to Work scheme. Well done Ashley; outstanding work and hopefully we can look forward to many more meetings to come.





Hi everyone,

We are coming to the end of 2020. It has been a strange and sometimes difficult year for all of us and I hope you are keeping safe and well.

Bulletin is here to keep you informed of what's still on and what's running online. We have our usual updates and some great catch ups with various events that have happened virtually.

Our AGM will not be able to go ahead as planned this year, so please make sure you read about the things Bromley Mencap has managed to achieve in our Executive report on pages 4-6.

We have some great photos from the Children's Wellbeing Service and the Lodge. Hope they bring you some cheer.

Make sure you check out how we have been continuing to fundraise this year and how you can get involved on page 22.

Take care and wishing you all the best over the Christmas period.

Luan
luanlanham@btinternet.com



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Events and Activities

Please check our website here <https://www.bromleymencap.org.uk/> or phone our helpline on 020 8466 0790 to find out about our latest events.
<https://www.bromleymencap.org.uk/coronavirus-covid-19-latest-update/bromley-mencap-services-update/>

Bromley Well has various support sessions running virtually, please check the website for details. <https://www.bromleywell.org.uk/events/>

Bromley Well online services include Employment Support workshops, workshops for people with learning difficulties and physical disabilities, Autism support sessions as well as our monthly Facebook quiz night.





CHIEF EXECUTIVE REPORT

Stay safe! **EDDIE LYNCH**

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE PAST YEAR

Unfortunately, due to the Covid-19 pandemic we are unable to hold our Annual General Meeting this year. The AGM was due to be held on 4th November where our Annual Report would have been presented to our members.

Our Summary Annual Report is available online and can be viewed [here](#)

Despite the impact of Covid-19 in March, I am pleased to report that Bromley Mencap had a very successful year.

Highlights from the last twelve months include:

- Purchasing new premises for the organisation
- Securing funding for a new Disability Cycling and Walking Club
- Launching a new pilot Bromley Well Autism Pathway service
- Starting a pilot to support students at the Lodge, who have completed their training, into volunteering and employment
- Creating a new role of Communications Officer to rebrand our materials, promote our activities and increase outreach
- Responding to the challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic and reorganising services to be delivered safely and through virtual platforms
- Being awarded the Kent Charity Mark in recognition of the quality of our work in the local community
- 86 new members joining the organisation



We have had a very busy year across our services and key highlights include:

- 15 students attended training courses in Catering, Horticulture and Bicycle Maintenance with three securing volunteering placements
- Our Day Opportunities Programme ran six days a week across two sites for 45 adults
- 125 disabled adults attended Monday Afternooners, Keep Fit, the Outdoors Activity Club and Dances
- Support for 1,100 families through our telephone helpline five days per week
- 180 new referrals were made to our Autism Family Support Service which also delivered seven workshops and monthly drop-ins
- Our Children's Wellbeing Service provided six coach trips for families and a range of workshops for disabled children, siblings and families
- Support for disabled people and carers to claim £500,000 in welfare benefits
- Fortnightly respite breaks for 14 families with complex needs
- 81 new jobs and 144 volunteering and work placements secured for disabled people
- Pathways to Employment programme with local schools and colleges supported 42 disabled students into work placements
- Weekly 'Step Forward' pre-employment workshops for up to 30 people with 15 securing jobs and 16 supported into volunteering or training
- Childminding support for nine disabled children providing respite for their families
- Support for 15 families through our Children's Sitting Service
- 40 children received care in their homes from our community support workers
- 18 families used our Buddying project
- 168 families with disabled children attended our coach trips benefiting from short breaks together





This year our Bromley Well Pathways provided a range of preventative support to disabled, vulnerable people and carers including:

- Support for 332 adults with learning difficulties including workshops and drop-ins attended by 132 people leading to greater independence and resilience
- Support for 349 adults with physical disabilities including workshops and drop-ins attended by 144 people leading to greater independence and self-management techniques
- Support for 58 mutual carers including 24 workshops and lunch clubs with guest speakers
- Monthly healthy cooking classes for learning disabled carers
- 75 people with Autism were supported through our new Pathway which launched in January
- 372 young carers attended leisure activities and were supported through workshops, coping strategies and counselling
- The Education and Employment Pathway supported 49 people into paid employment and 86 into volunteering and work placements

Over the next year we will be ensuring we address the ongoing challenges of Covid-19 to deliver virtual services and support as well as face-to-face and group activities when it is safe to do so. We will also be focusing on fundraising to develop and extend our new property to deliver more services for disabled people across the borough.

Look out for updates on progress in the Bulletin!

‘Tell us about your Care’ Survey
Disabled people and their families are facing further uncertainty as we enter a second national lockdown. The Care Quality Commission (CQC) are keen to learn more about how access to NHS services – including hospitals, pharmacies, GP surgeries and care homes – is affecting people living with a disability or long-term health conditions, so that the CQC can plan the future of the NHS and care services. Complete the survey [here](#)



Quarter of UK adults became carers during pandemic
The Equalities and Human Rights Commission report, How coronavirus has affected equality and human rights, has found that reduced access to care, combined with isolation measures, has resulted in 4.5 million more people in the UK taking on unpaid caring responsibilities since the start of the pandemic. This is a rise of almost 50%. Caring responsibilities fall disproportionately on young women with children, with an impact on their health and wellbeing, relationships, finances and employment. Read the report [here](#)



Disability Power 100
The Shaw Trust has published its annual Power 100 list of the UK’s most influential disabled people. They include Sophie Morgan, Srin Madipalli, Gavin Harding MBE, Shani Dhanda, Simon Minty, Jonathan Andrews, Samantha Renke, Caroline Casey and Nikki Fox. See the full list [here](#)



Nicknamed “Super Sam”, Sam Holness is an Ironman Triathlete with Autism.

Bromley Disabled Youth Forum
Are you aged 11-18 and disabled? Want to improve life in Bromley and make a real change? Why not join Bromley XbyX Disabled Youth Forum. Call 020 8650 2102 or email barry@xbyxbromley.com for more information.

Bromley Disabled Youth Forum

Bromley XbyX is an organisation run by and for Deaf and Disabled people. We are empowering Disabled Young people by setting up a Disabled Youth Forum!

The Disabled Youth Forum members will get support to:

- Strengthen their voices to be heard by decision makers.
- Put their ideas forward to improve Bromley services for Disabled people.
- Learn from the Disabled campaigners that are creating change today! by working with Disabled peers and professional as part of a supportive, London-wide Disability network.

Aged 11 – 18 and Disabled?

Want to help improve life in Bromley and make a real change?

Extra support is available for people with additional access needs!

For more information:

020 8650 2102

barry@xbyxbromley.com

Lewis House, 30 Beckenham Road, BR3 4LS

We support adults with physical disabilities by providing information, advice and guidance. Although we are currently unable to make face-to-face appointments or home visits, we are still able to work closely with our clients via the telephone.

We are able to offer emotional support and we are working remotely to help clients complete paperwork and forms such as blue badge applications and grants.

Monthly Workshops

We have continued our workshops via Zoom. For our October workshop, we invited Tristan Owen from South East London Community Energy to talk to the group about energy efficiency in their homes. He gave us tips on how to save money and how to keep our homes warm in the winter. He explained the various grants that are available to people.

South East London Community Energy offers a free telephone advice service. Telephone 0808 169 1779 to book a consultation.



Facebook:

You can also follow us on Facebook where you will find lots of useful information and guidance: <https://www.facebook.com/BWPhysicalDisabilities/>

Contact Us:

If you are interested in attending one of our Zoom workshops or you would like to find out more about our service, please contact the office on 020 8466 0790.

You can also contact one of our Support and Information Officers as follows:

Sue Fuller on 07484673090 or email Sue.Fuller@bromleywell.org.uk

Chetan Raval on 07421106922 or email Chetan.Raval@bromleywell.org.uk

On Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/BWPhysicalDisabilities/>

Alternatively you can call us in the office on 020 8466 0790.

NEWS - Physical Disabilities

Covid rules make taxi travel difficult for disabled people

Some private taxi drivers are refusing to take passengers in their front seat to prevent close contact, making it more difficult for disabled people to travel. Read Stephen Cook's story in [here](#)



Multiple Sclerosis: Painting is a 'distraction' from the pain

Members of the MS Therapy Centre (Beds and Northants) explained that painting helped them cope with symptoms and "uplift" them. Dr Kay Taylor, chairwoman of the centre's trustees, said: "When we ran an art exhibition last year it made us realise how our community is interested in art and use it as a therapy for their wellbeing and mental health. Read the full story [here](#)



England's elite disability cricket team inspiring new players

Players with a range of disabilities are enjoying the sport and the game is thriving throughout the country. More [here](#)



Concerns over lack of British Sign Language (BSL) interpreters at coronavirus briefings

A Deaf campaigner is set to take legal action against the government after they failed to provide British Sign Language (BSL) interpreters at televised coronavirus briefings. More [here](#)



Tributes paid to disabled activist Sian Vasey who died recently

Sian Vasey was a "multi-layered activist" in the disabled people's movement for more than 40 years. She was a pioneering member of the disability arts movement, a BBC producer, a writer, a campaigner on issues such as accessible transport and independent living, and as a Labour party and union activist. More [here](#)



Supporting People with Learning Disabilities

We support people who have a learning disability or learning difficulty through one-to-one appointments, assisting in meetings or contacting organisations. Our approach is to run a person-centred service giving information, guidance and support. The Learning Disability Pathway has recently offered emotional support for people in isolation, support with new benefit applications and benefit checks, and with various housing matters.



Outreach

Please visit our Facebook page [here](#) for up-to-date guidance and information for people with learning difficulties. We have shared a number of stories and articles on our page including the latest guidance regarding the new lockdown. We also have a Facebook group. This is a private group on Facebook where only members of the group can see what you have written or posted. We are available every working day and are currently in regular contact with many clients on this platform.

If you would like to learn more, please join the group [here](#) or contact Rob for help with setting this up.



Monthly Workshops and Drop-ins

In September we held an online health workshop. We discussed annual health checks, flu jabs, hospital passports, GP services from home and medical emergency cards. This was run on Zoom and then the conversation continued over on our Facebook group. Contact us if you would like a copy of our information pack.

In October Malcolm and Kerry from EMPOWER facilitated a workshop about Parliament to encourage service users to develop active citizenship skills for life.



Call, text or email Rob Morgan if you would like any more information about the Learning Disability service on 020 8466 0790, mobile 07482 558 660 or email robert.morgan@bromleywell.org.uk

NEWS - Learning Disabilities

The Bubble Club

The Bubble Club, co run by members with Learning Disabilities, has produced its first online episode of Bubble Club TV – Bubble Rumble. Watch episode one [here](#)



Self Care Week

As part of Self Care week, Bromley Well is putting together a programme of events and linking up with other organisations across the borough. Starting Monday 16th November, there will be workshops, videos and new resources available via our website. Take a look at our schedule [here](#) and book yourself on to some of our online events!



Flu Jabs

Are you eligible for a free flu jab this year? Anyone with a learning disability is entitled to receive a free flu vaccination.

Check our website [here](#) for more information



Supporting People with Autism

We support people aged 16 and over who have an Autism diagnosis, or believe they have Autism and are seeking a diagnosis, through one-to-one appointments, assisting in meetings or contacting organisations. Our approach is to run a person-centred service giving information, guidance and support. We have recently supported students returning to school and college, tenants dealing with rent arrears, and supported people with benefit appeals and enquiries.

Online

Please visit our Facebook Page:

<https://www.facebook.com/BWAutismSupport> for up-to-date guidance and information for people with Autism. We share relevant stories and articles on our page, including supported internships for young people with Autism, what it is like to be diagnosed with Autism as an adult, and free assistance with managing money.

We also have a Facebook group and only members of the group can see what you have written or posted. We are available every working day and are currently in regular contact with many clients on this platform. If you would like to learn more, please join the group at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/BWAutismSupport> or contact Lauren for help with setting this up.

We also have a regular e-newsletter with details, including Zoom links, for all of our upcoming events. Please email Lauren to receive this newsletter.

Bromley Well

Monthly Workshops and Drop-ins

We are currently running workshops via Zoom in association with CASPA on the last Tuesday of every month. We have recently been discussing money. In September we were joined by an accountant who answered many of our questions and in October we discussed banking with Metro Bank and benefits with Matt Yule. Thank you to all of those who attended and joined in the discussion.

We are also running a TV and Film Club via Zoom on alternate Wednesdays. We can share our favourite films or what we have recently been watching. It is a lighter session and a great way to get some good recommendations and to let the group know why your choices are important to you.



We also welcome a new staff member to our team – Lauren Titheridge is now the Information and Support Officer for our Bromley Well Autism Project. She will be joining our meetings, so you'll be able to meet her soon.

Call Lauren if you would like any more information about the Autism service on 020 8466 0790 or email lauren.titheridge@bromleywell.org.uk

IN THE NEWS

CASPA Futures



CASPA has launched a new service for people aged 18+. The service has organised groups called Walk and Talk (in High Elms Country Park), Art and Craft Projects (in Community House) and many others. For more information, speak to your CASPA contact. If you are not currently accessing CASPA services and would like more information, please email contactus@caspabromley.org.uk

'At 47, I discovered I am autistic – suddenly so many things made sense'

The words of a CEO, wife and mother, Rachel Rowe about how her daughter's Autism diagnosis led her to seek her own diagnosis. More [here](#)



Bromley Well

Delayed autism diagnosis an enormous problem for girls

Autistic girls can almost take on entire personalities of other people to fit in, says Fiona Ferris, deputy chief executive of the Irish Autism charity AsIAM. "I usually describe it as being a 'social chameleon', where you can adapt in any situation you're in."

More [here](#)



Flu Jabs

With more people eligible for flu jabs than ever before, it is worth checking whether you can get a free jab. If not, you may still wish to pay at a pharmacy. Find information [here](#):

Mutual Carers News and Events

Bromley Well

We continue to provide specialist support to mutual carers where one of the carers is aged 55+ with a disabled son, daughter or sibling living at home. With the postponement of our usual events, we delivered lunches to our clients who usually attend the older carers' workshop and lunch. These were warmly welcomed, and we received some lovely feedback. It was so nice to see everyone looking well and staying safe.



Mutual Carers News and Events

Bromley Well

A few carers that attend our learning disability cookery club met in Norman Park for a picnic. This was adapted to adhere to government guidelines. Clients brought their own lunch and enjoyed the chance to see each other. On departure, clients were given a bag of ready-measured ingredients and easy-read recipe cards for making ham and cheese omelettes and fairy cakes at home.

The Mutual Carers Support Worker, Tina Penn, is still busy providing telephone support and checking in regularly with all families. Tina can be contacted on 07719426680 or 020 8466 0790.



Bromley Well Employment and Education update

Bromley Well

Despite Covid-19 restrictions, the Bromley Well Employment and Education Team have continued to offer services online to support anyone looking for work or wishing to access volunteering and educational opportunities. We have been running weekly workshops via Zoom covering subjects such as online interview techniques, assertiveness, time management and life skills. These have proved to be very popular and are regularly attended by up to 20 people each week. The format usually involves a catch up with everyone and suggestions for TV recommendations, as well as the ever popular 'question of the week.' We then have a discussion around various employment-related topics, and finish off with a short online quiz.

Lockdown continues to be a challenge in terms of accessing employment, volunteering or education for our clients, but since April, we have continued to work and have succeeded in supporting people to access these opportunities.



Virtual Keep Fit Podcast Number 11 – Halloween Special

Virtual Keep Fit

Unfortunately due to Covid-19, we were unable to hold our usual keep fit sessions so we decided to arrange a virtual class instead. Thanks to Ann Wilbourn for recording 10 weekly exercise sessions which were uploaded to our website. Just in case you missed them, here they are but be wary of the spooky one at the end!

<https://www.bromleymencap.org.uk/project/keep-fit/>



Talking of spooky things – DJ Steve Catchpole was happy to record a disco podcast for Halloween. Many of you sent in shout-outs and requests with all your favourite spooky tunes and it wouldn't be a podcast without a 'Jack Joke,' so we all laughed at one of those too! All of the podcasts from 1-11 are still available to listen to here

<https://www.bromleymencap.org.uk/download/halloween-disco/>



Monday Afternooners

Over the past few months, members and helpers have been keeping in touch via their WhatsApp group. They have been chatting, sharing pictures, games and quizzes. There has also been a little singing!

In late September, the group managed to meet for one more picnic in the afternoon sunshine. Members and some of the helpers met in Queens Gardens in Bromley to chat, catch up and enjoy a picnic together whilst adhering to government guidelines.

We will also be hosting a virtual quiz and cream tea very soon.



The Children's Wellbeing Service

The Children's Wellbeing Service, funded by BBC Children in Need, organised four interactive Zoom workshops over the half-term holiday and the feedback from the family members who attended has been fantastic! It was clear that the children and grown-ups really enjoyed participating in the reptile encounter, pottery painting (all materials supplied by Flying Colours Pottery) and a relaxing yoga session facilitated by Claire and Olivia from Yoga Bright.

"The reptile encounter was fabulous! My boys were hooked, listening to every word and were genuinely fascinated by the information coming from the Essex reptile encounter representative."
"My son loved the reptile sessions. He loves reptiles and he enjoyed learning more about them. The session was well organised and very informative. My son liked to ask and answer questions."
"It is so lovely to have some time together to do something fun and not have the pressure to organise it all!"

"My kids both engaged and focused on something together (which was a miracle) and they also loved the live interactions and friendly faces; it really encouraged them and left them on a high."
"I was actually shocked at how long he spent doing this. Usually he has zero interest, but he honestly sat there for a good 4/5 minutes concentrating and then came back and forth during the session which was fantastic to see!"



Day Opportunities

Day Opps reopened in September and everyone was delighted to be back. It is not quite Day Opps as we knew it, but we are running sessions Tuesday through to Friday each week with a maximum of six clients each day. This enables us to socially distance and, as we are in bubbles, limit the number of people we are in contact with. As you would expect, we have an increased cleaning routine in place and are following an enhanced risk assessment, which enables us to still meet whilst taking the appropriate precautions.

All our clients have their own bag of resources, and we are getting out each day for some fresh air and exercise. Even though the groups are smaller, everyone is having a great time and are happy to be back seeing friends and staff in person.

The Lodge

The Lodge reopened in the summer with students initially attending on a one-to-one basis with their subject tutor. This was a great stepping stone back to services but didn't really enable our students to meet up with their friends. After a few weeks of one-to-one support, we moved to two clients per session which was a great step forward. We now have twenty clients signed up to sessions at the Lodge and have been able to increase the sessions available to accommodate everyone.

Thanks to some funding from the National Lottery Coronavirus Community Support Fund and the London Community Response Fund to support organisations through Covid-19, we have been able to source new furniture at the Lodge and we are really pleased with the end result. It was a good opportunity to have a clear out and set up the room to enable social distancing.

We are waiting on the new screens which will go between the tables, but we think it is already looking much improved. We also have two new sheds on order, as we are going to change our existing shed into an outdoor learning area for our students.



A grant from the Lottery 25th Anniversary Celebration Fund also enabled us to buy some new equipment for our Horticulture project – two VegTrug raised planting beds, some new shelves for the polytunnel to increase our capacity for seedlings, and a new vertical planting wall. We are working out the best places to site these new additions at the moment, but they will make a huge difference to the garden and will certainly keep our horticulture students busy.



Saturday Club

We have not been able to meet for our usual Saturday Club project, but our team have been visiting our clients in their homes to provide a short break for their families. We have been working with our Saturday Club facilitators and they have made short activity videos for the clients to do at home. Along with the videos, we have been sourcing all the resources required for the activities and have been delivering them to clients each month. We have received some great photographs of completed cookery projects, and this is clearly working well for many of the clients we support.



Bikes

Bromley Mencap staff may well be visiting you by bike once we are able to do face-to-face visits again. As part of a project with Transport for London to encourage staff to commute by bike rather than by car or public transport, we are really pleased to have received two new bikes for our team. One is an electric bike and the other is a folding bike. Staff will be using them to commute to work and for their visits during the day. This is a really exciting project to be a part of and we thank Stephen Blann at Sustran for his support with getting this project up and running.

Transport for London has also launched some new online training modules for people wanting to cycle – have a look at the link [here](#) if this is something that might be of interest.

Free Bike Hire and Sales Project

Following a very successful social media campaign, we have been really busy at the Community Hub in Norman Park, lending out bikes for people to enjoy in the park and selling reconditioned bikes to our local community. The bikes have all been donated and recycled by our disabled students; it is always great to see them going to good homes after all our hard work. Thank you to everyone who has supported this project – if you still have an old bike lurking in the back of your shed that you don't need, please consider donating it to our project. We may be closed for a short while due to the second lockdown, but please keep an eye on social media because we are looking forward to being able to lend you some bikes again very soon.



Christmas Raffle

Our Christmas raffle tickets are now on sale. The draw will be held on Thursday 3 December and the prizes include £250 cash, £100 Love2shop vouchers, £50 M&S gift card, a wine hamper and a £25 Cannons Cars Ltd voucher.

If you haven't received your tickets already, please contact us to arrange delivery today on 020 8466 0790.



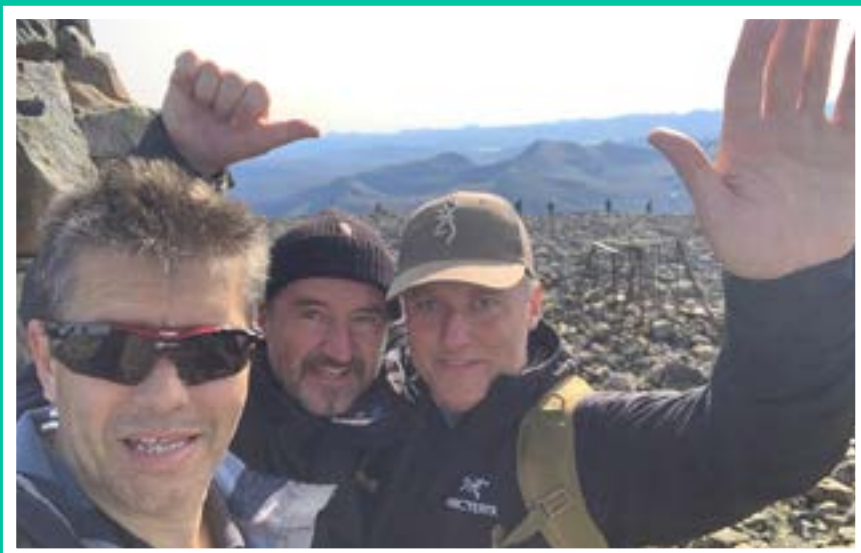
THANKS TO OUR FUNDRAISERS!

Ben Nevis Climb

Well done to Matt Yule, Adult Support Services Manager, and his friends Anthony Marchant and Jason Bell who successfully climbed Ben Nevis on 19 September and raised a whopping £1,799!

"All went really well but it was actually much harder than expected. We took the main path, known as the Pony Track, which is about 10.5 miles including a 1352 metre ascent. At one point, we reached a plateau which holds Loch Meall an t-Suidhe. Here we bumped into a chap and asked him how much further, expecting him to say about another hour to go (we'd already been walking two hours). He replied by saying we hadn't got halfway yet! The zig zag paths seemed never ending, but another two hours later and we'd made it. We celebrated with a miniature bottle of Jack Daniels each."

The team definitely earned a celebratory drink and thank you once again for another amazing fundraiser!



Cup Final

Orpington and Bromley District Sunday Football League had chosen Bromley Mencap as their charity for 2020 but the football season came to an abrupt end in March with no matches played for a number of months. Luckily, the cup final eventually went ahead with limited spectators and we were delighted to be presented with a cheque for £1,200. Thank you to all involved.



London Marathon

A huge thank you and well done to Trudy Pearson who took part in the London Marathon – The 40th Race. On a very wet Sunday in October, runners took to the local streets and pavements to complete 26.2 miles in a very different virtual race this year. Trudy raised an amazing £383.75!

Facebook Fundraisers

Thank you to Rob Morgan, Bromley Well's Senior Information and Support Officer, for creating a birthday fundraiser on Facebook and raising £50. It's a great way to raise money, so when it's your birthday just ask friends to donate. It's very easy to create your fundraisers here:

<https://www.facebook.com/fund/BromleyMencap/>

Quiz Night at Home

Thank you to all our supporters who took part in our annual quiz night. This year, like so many events and activities, we had to hold it virtually and were delighted with its success. Together with our online raffle, we raised £409. Congratulations to the Pellatt family who were crowned our 2020 quiz winners.

Thanks to our Supporters

Huge thanks to the following supporters for their continued support to our cause. We think you are all amazing!

Identity E2E Ltd for a donation of £4,000

TK Maxx and Homesense Foundation for donating £500

Waitrose, Biggin Hill, Beckenham and Bromley South for donating a total of £1,000 over the past few months via their Community Matters Scheme.

Big Yellow Self Storage

Thank you to Big Yellow Self Storage Bromley for providing free storage space. With no space in our small office, this is invaluable for our events equipment and donated goods. These items are used at our community events throughout the year and raised an amazing £11,352 in 2019. Members also receive a 10% discount on storage from Big Yellow when mentioning Bromley Mencap. Telephone 020 8313 0854 for further details.



Don't forget you can keep updated on what is going on at Bromley Mencap by following us on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

Copy deadline for January/February 2021 is 1st January

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