

# WILSON WILSON & HANCOCK NEWS



**A REMINDER** of how we can help you during lockdown.

- New glasses and sunglasses
- Eyecare via emergency phone consultations
- Repairs to your specs or sunglasses
- Contact lens deliveries

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**STAY WHERE YOU ARE WE'LL COME TO YOU**

How we are still here for you with our contactless deliveries, remote advice and consultations.

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**NEWS** and photos on how the WWH team are doing in the lockdown.

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**CHALLENGING TIMES**

A message from Phil Wilson to you, our valued patients.

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## Welcome to the Wilson Wilson & Hancock newsletter

Every quarter we will update you on all the latest developments, new products and special offers available at our branches. To find out more or to discuss anything mentioned in this newsletter please contact us using the details below.

# STAY WHERE YOU ARE WE'LL COME TO YOU

CONTACTLESS  
DELIVERIES



Since you can't come to us, we'll come to you. During the coronavirus pandemic we have postponed routine eye examinations and styling consultations, but rest assured we are still very much here for you.

We're a proactive, solutions focused bunch and two of us are now working out of our Hastings practice with all phone lines directed to Hastings so don't be confused. There is Hannah and me (Jo) on the phones and Paul McDonald your friendly Optometrist available for eyecare advice. You would be amazed with what we can do with just a telephone, email, WhatsApp and video conferencing. And of course, our quarterly trusted newsletter also lets us 'come to you'.

Our aim is to keep providing you with the best personal service we have always believed in, so please ring, email or use our Facebook messenger to let us know how we can help you with any contact lens queries or orders, essential eyecare health advice, referral advice, broken spectacles and replacement spectacles, eyedrops and contact lens solutions or just for a chat.

We are providing a non-contact home delivery service with a smile between the hours of 3pm to 5.30pm (sometimes a little later depending on how difficult you are to find!) and manning the phones between 9am and 3pm. If you call after 3pm leave us a message and we will get back to you as soon as possible.

We have loved talking to you all since the lockdown and Paul, Hannah and I have been down more alley ways, and passages and off-the-beaten-track lanes than ever before and you have all been very inventive too with arrows on the floor guiding Wilsons, to amazing instructions to find you all. It has been a real giggle speaking with some of you and has confirmed for us how lovely our customers are.



*Hannah*



*Jo*



*Paul at home*

# CHALLENGING TIMES

## A message from Phil Wilson



Lewes Branch

The next few weeks and months will undoubtedly prove extremely challenging for WWH. We have been advised to stop all normal eye tests and are only seeing patients with emergencies and supplying contact lenses. Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland have put financial measures into place to keep practices functioning, but not in England yet. Jo Burgess and Paul McDonald, with a skeleton staff, are working tirelessly to keep us afloat.

Whilst it's true to say that nothing quite like this has happened in the past, there have been some major crises that we have weathered over the years. For instance, my dad, Frank Wilson, could not have imagined when he joined a practice in Hastings that he would have six years of wartime privations when he was suddenly seeing only six or seven patients in a week, frequently having to ask the building society to suspend his mortgage payments. At the same time, he was raising a family with little money, food shortages and rationing. He was in the Home Guard (Dad's Army) and was an Air Raid Warden, so was patrolling the streets most evenings. His only transport was an ex-Post Office bicycle which he painted black over the original red. We lived by Alexandra Park in Hastings and had bombs dropping and dog fights overhead, but I felt I had a wonderful childhood.



Frank Wilson

Recovery was very slow after the war, but when the NHS started in 1948, eye tests were free to everyone as were NHS spectacles. Immediately, he was seeing fifty to sixty patients a week and by working six days a week and doing all the bookwork on a Sunday himself, built a solid base from where we developed to the point where we have the four practices today. However, it has not all been plain sailing - some years ago, when we had just purchased a practice in Brighton the Government introduced sight test fees for everyone except children and those over 60 and on low income. This resulted in a dramatic drop in numbers and it was a real struggle to

manage to keep all our staff and get by, but things gradually came back to normal.

Then, the Government allowed advertising for the first time, just as the Priory Meadow precinct was built in Hastings. This meant that the multiple concerns could start a practice and become busy almost straight away. Four came to Hastings, more or less at the same time - the result after two or three years was a dramatic downturn for us, but by persevering and concentrating on quality and service it has been gratifying to see patients returning in numbers.

In October 2000, the river Ouse in Lewes burst its banks and our practice there was inundated by five feet of water. It was put out of action for over four months, and much of the equipment was ruined. But a mammoth effort by all the staff kept things going in temporary accommodation and they were able to salvage the damaged records and replace them. Every cloud has a silver lining and we were able to re-design the practice and upgrade the equipment and we were soon back to normal.

We have been so lucky over the years to have dedicated colleagues and staff, but more importantly, a very loyal patient base. Only in the week before the lockdown, I examined three patients who had all been coming to the practice for around 70 years, from when they were children, and over the years I have seen their children and grandchildren.

**Rest assured we are working very hard to get through this and hope that things will return to normal and that we will be able to see you again in the practice soon.**



## THE WWH TEAM

The rest of the WWH team are all doing fine and staying safe.

They have all been furloughed whilst the lockdown is in place, but are still coming together for weekly zoom video coffee mornings to keep everyone communicating and in the loop. There has been lots of baking going on as well as arts and crafts, home schooling and some light "forced" child labour. All in all, the team have been fantastic with checking in and supporting each other and us. And of course, they miss you!



Natalie Tiltman and daughter playing Pool sticks



Rebecca Binder



Nuleen Panday's treats



Rachel Wheatley's coffee time



Claire Conibear's Easter bonnet competition



Claire Rowley's Zumba classes



Vicky Young and family on their daily exercise with their new baby



A rainbow from Melanie Jakeman's son



Banana brownie henge



Hannah Brooks and her decoupage



Sue Winter looking back



Debbie Jenner's cake



## A REMINDER WE ARE STILL HERE FOR YOU

Below are the ways in which we can help you:

- 1. New glasses and sunglasses** – If you need new glasses, we can arrange a phone and video consultation and walk you through the possibilities.
- 2. Eyecare** – Our optometrists are available for emergency phone consultations to give advice and guidance if you have any concerns about your vision or the health of your eyes.
- 3. Repairs** – If you are local to us we can collect your broken specs and work our magic; for those of you not so local, please post them to us and we will repair your specs or sunglasses and return them via the post to you.
- 4. Contact lenses** - If you need contact lenses, we can order them and either deliver them or arrange for them to be posted to you.