



**Spring 2021
Magazine**

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Sight Advice South Lakes

As the coronavirus continues to have significant impact on our communities, we're continuing to adapt our services to ensure that we support people with sight loss whilst protecting people's health and acting in the best interest of our members, our staff and the wider community.

Our office remains closed for drop-in visitors. However, we are offering one to one support through home visits and by telephone during normal working hours: Monday-Thursday, 9.30am-4.00pm. We are continuing with our online support, advice and guidance. Please contact us to receive an up to date What's On guide.

We continually review our services to ensure we are operating in a Covid Secure environment and groups and activity groups will return when it is safe to do so.

If you feel you, or someone you know, would benefit from an appointment or consultation, please call 01539 769055 or email info@sightadvice.org.uk.

Welcome to our Spring magazine.

I hope I find our readers and their families safe and well. As we started the year in yet another national lockdown, I want to reassure our readers that although our centre remains closed, we are very much still open to offer you support and guidance. With the roll out of the vaccination programme we remain hopeful that we will be able to recommence face to face support in the, not too distant, future. However, if you do need some support now or would just like to say hello and have a quick chat, please give us a call on 01539 769055 - we enjoy hearing from you.



I would like to thank all the people who gave very generously to our request for donations in place of raffle tickets and also, for the messages of support. Individual donations are so important to a small charity like ours and all money raised is spent on supporting services for local people living with a visual impairment.

In December we said goodbye to Amy Pearman, our Services Manager, as she has taken an exciting position as events and communication lead with national charity Visionary. Luckily, we will continue to work very closely with Amy in her new role and we wish her all the best for the future. We are currently in the process of recruiting for Amy's replacement.

Once again, if you are feeling lonely or find yourself struggling, please pick up the phone and give us a call. We can offer support and set up regular calls with our fantastic volunteer befrienders or signpost you to other support available locally.

Finally stay safe, stay positive, keep smiling - Spring is round the corner.

During the Covid 19 pandemic the way Assistive Technology is both perceived and delivered has had to change rapidly. Below is a quick summary of how Sight Advice South Lakes has adapted to meet the needs of it's members.



1. Community Engagement via Zoom and BABL.

Due to social distancing and lockdown measures introduced to keep people safe and stop the spread of the virus, many community activities were put on hold. As we knew Sight Advice activities were starting to be missed quite quickly, we used technology to take activities into people's homes.

Zoom, a video-based system has been used for people who have broadband/ Wi-Fi in their homes to join weekly meetings and events. These have included quizzes, poetry, talks and information on eye conditions, Westmorland Gazette talking Newspaper readings and much more. However, please note a person can also dial in to these sessions using their landline phone. We have had over 4000 contacts for these Zoom sessions.

BABL is a landline phone system that automatically "dials" into people's home phones. Just pick up the phone when it rings at the stated time and you are in a meeting with your friends. It's free. This has been used in some parts of South Lakes for the community group meetings. One BABL meeting had 19 people in attendance. Poetry, quizzes, general catching up with friends and finding out about people's lives, especially around Covid19 vaccination have all occurred at these BABL meetings.

Just contact me on 01539 769055 or tim@sightadvice.org.uk for more information or how to join; it is quite simple and we can guide you through it. We can even have one to one test demonstrations to give you the confidence. Also, contact us if you want your email added to our events database so that you can receive details of all events in advance.

2. Keeping up to date with Assistive technology.

At Sight Advice we have used Zoom to have fortnightly "Tech Know How" sessions on alternative Wednesday mornings at 10.00am.

We have been fortunate enough to get some of the world's leading products demonstrated "live" to our members. The most popular products have been handheld electronic video magnification and devices that talk back, such as Synaptic tablets and Orcam Read.

Sight Advice has contact details of several companies that can undertake home demonstrations free of charge, with no obligation. Those carrying out the demonstrations have full PPE and adhere to social distancing.

Just contact Tim if you want to explore these options.

3. Positive Steps on Zoom.

Due to restrictions on opening our building, it has not been possible to run our popular "Positive Steps" course. However, we are going to run it on Zoom.

This course is designed to give people with sight loss, and their carers an understanding of certain sight conditions and gives advice and ideas on how to live a positive life with sight loss.

This includes advice on lighting, magnification, aids to daily living, the practical support available, as well as possible financial benefits and assistive technology solutions. It is also a good opportunity to meet other people with sight loss and share ideas and stories. It's a free course, held over 3 weeks in one-hour sessions. If anyone is interested in joining a course, please get in touch and I will set one up.

Tim Ward. Assistive Technology Co-ordinator

[Email: tim@sightadvice.org.uk](mailto:tim@sightadvice.org.uk)

Here for Your Eye Care Needs During the Pandemic

The Coronavirus pandemic has been seen to have a profound effect on people's willingness to access health care which, in turn, has led to poor health outcomes. With eye health this unfortunately means some people are now left with irreversible sight loss.



During the first lock down from March to June 2020 all elective care was suspended. Primary care optical practice remained open for urgent and emergency care only. Many patients were triaged and diagnosed entirely by telephone or video consultation. This meant that for those requiring face to face consultations, contact times were able to be kept to a minimum as the history and symptoms had already been ascertained before the patient arrived and some patients could be dealt with entirely by remote consultation. In the first few weeks of lockdown a lot of the patients seen for face-to-face appointments presented with foreign bodies in their eyes after the increase in DIY undertaken. A pair of inexpensive safety specs or goggles would have stopped a significant number of these from occurring.

From July 2020 routine care was reinstated, as capacity allowed, with urgent and emergency care still prioritised. This has remained unchanged through the last two lockdowns. Routine sight testing is still an important part of care as problems can be detected before people become symptomatic. In community optometry, telephone and video consultations are still ongoing as well as the ability to book for face-to-face consultations. Community optometry has made significant changes to the layout of practices and has often extended appointment times to ensure that the environment is as safe as it can be. Appropriate PPE, as stipulated by the regulatory bodies, is worn and practices are cleaned frequently to minimise risk. If you have concerns about your eyes or eye health, then telephone your community optometrist.

A Talk by Miles Hilton-Barber

Jackie Bateman

**The only limits in your life are those you accept yourself.....
a talk by Miles Hilton-Barber.**

In November we welcomed blind adventurer Miles Hilton-Barber to talk to us about his adventures. Miles has Retinitis Pigmentosa (RP) and lost his sight in his early 20's. It was not until his 50's when he realised that his brother, also similarly affected by RP, had a far better quality of life and level of success, that his life changed - not through sight restoration, but through changing his attitude to his sight loss.



Since then, Miles has been determined to meet life's challenges full on and to work hard to fulfil his dreams. He calls himself a 'dangerous dreamer' and he is determined that the only limits in his life are the ones that he accepts himself. Miles has, since this moment of realization in his 50s, set and achieved numerous goals.

For instance, he now holds the Malaysian Grand Prix lap record for a blind driver in a 230kph Lotus. He has undertaken a 55-day, 21,000 kilometre, microlight flight from London to Sydney, relying on revolutionary speech-output technology and accompanied by his sighted co-pilot for only critical parts of the journey. He has hauled a sledge over 250 miles across Antarctica, being forced to stop before finishing because of frostbite, as well as numerous mountaineering and flying achievements. Now he is a motivational speaker and has delivered speeches to businesses worldwide.

Throughout the talk, Miles was keen to stress that his message was the importance of working to believe that you can achieve your dreams, whether it is taking up a hobby or participating in adventures and challenges such as his. Whatever your dreams and at whatever level you are working, being able to achieve what is meaningful to you is the most important thing.

Here are a few quotes from his talk:

"Our quality of life is not a reflection on our circumstances but on our response to our circumstances."

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"Life does not consist of holding a good hand of cards but of playing a poor hand well- you can't change your hand, but you can change how you deal it."

"He who is not willing to RISK going BEYOND his limits should not complain about the mediocrity of his existence!"

As Miles said, "a seeing person with no vision is him/herself blind, to possibilities."

Here at Sight Advice South Lakes, we understand those possibilities and with our Community Circles project we believe that our members can work towards their dreams and goals. This applies whether it is, for instance, riding a tandem, sailing or being able to chat to friends online. If you are interested in this and want to explore your potential, then do contact Jackie at Sight Advice for a chat.

More information about Miles' adventures can be found at <https://www.mileshilton-barber.com>

Volunteering

Julie Halford

I think we can all agree that it has been a challenging few months and we are probably running out of all the superlatives to describe the time we have had and how we are feeling. One of the constant highlights throughout this strange year has been the kindness of people and the different ways in which they have stepped up to help their communities.

The volunteers with Sight Advice have shown their kindness and consideration in lots of ways, checking in on people; delivering prescriptions; holding online events; dropping off cards and unexpected presents and telephoning regularly to remind people they are not alone. It is more important than ever to feel a connection to your community at a time when it is quite easy to hibernate and lose the knack of actual social contact.

Hard to believe as it is, there will be an end and we will come out of our shells, scratching our heads, and wondering "What do we do now?" Now is the time to prepare for that and we can help. Our volunteers have been making regular check in calls to people living on their own and far away from family. Connections have been made and both volunteer and client cannot wait for the time when they can meet and have that cup of tea; trip to the shops or just a

walk around the park. We hope that this will help the confidence of people coming out into a world which may seem a little strange and overwhelming at first.

Our volunteers can help with adapting to the new social barriers which have been put in place in shops, surgeries and cafes. They can make those around aware that you may need extra support and understanding and just make it that much better getting out and about with someone rather than by yourself.

The first stage is the most difficult and probably quite alien to those who are very stoical, capable and fiercely independent. This is to reach out, call us and have a chat about the types of things you may need support with or the company you may wish to have when getting out and about. We can connect you to a volunteer now and you can get to know each other over the phone, chat about things that may concern you and plan your way out of Lockdown together. Sight loss is hard enough when you did not have to worry about whether you are 2 metres from someone or did not see the Perspex screen or which door was in or out. Getting to know once familiar places all over again is much easier together, so get in touch for a confidential chat about your hopes and fears and we will do what we can to support you.

Fundraising News

Aileen Ward

Hello everyone.

A big thanks to those supporting our online fundraising events these last few months. The Bingo nights have proved especially popular (thank you Diane and John for all your help) and the Online Auction. Both bingo and the auction have done really well, raising over £800 towards the work of the charity and bringing lots of fun to the dark nights!



The kindness of our business community in donating prizes and our creative volunteers meant that people attending the events really enjoyed them. We attracted friends both old and new to the

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Sight Advice Community too, which is important as people who may need us or know someone who does, realize we are here to help.

The popular, challenging Christmas themed quiz sheets, prepared by Chris Jackson, have also sold well, as always. A big Thank You to Chris, who has raised £335 so far and will be contacting the winners.

We are hosting a number of online events in the next couple of months to help us stay connected during these times. Events in April and May have yet to be confirmed so keep up to date through our What's On or our Facebook Page.

Please get in touch, if you would like to get involved in any way related to Fundraising or want to come along to a Bingo or Quiz Zoom night or to join in the online Auction. To register your interest or ask for more details for any of these events, you can either call the office on 01539 769055 or email me: aileen@sightadvice.org.uk

That's all for now everyone stay safe and well friends – Aileen.

What's Next ? Fundraising

Fri March 12th 7.30pm Online Bingo with John "Bingo" Wilkinson and Diane Boulder. Cash Prize top House £25 and Top Line of the evening £10. Other prizes include wine and Easter Eggs. £5 per card of 5 games.

March 1st to 26th Golden Ticket £5 each to win a fabulous hamper of chocolate goodies or an Easter egg. There are several of these among the prizes. Want to join? Contact me for your number to be allocated and payment details. The draw will be live on Zoom Fri 26th March, and we will send an invite to all entrants to join in.

Online Auction and Craft Fayre 21st- 28th March on Facebook Are you a craftsperson, knitter, jewellery maker, potter, or artist? Please get in touch as we need items for this, and it is an ideal opportunity to promote your skills. If you don't use Facebook but want to join in, email me for a catalogue nearer the time. Bids can be placed via myself as the host, if you don't use Facebook, (Aileen).

What's On Spring 2021 For you to pull out and keep

All activities and events take place using Zoom or BABL with capability for you to telephone in to join. The event will state which application it uses.

We know that these are confusing and trying times, so please do ring if you would like support to access any of the sessions or have any questions. It is what we are here for!

Using Zoom

Unless stated use this link to access Sight Advice Zoom Meetings:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/4580437872>

Alternatively go to Zoom website and use

Meeting 458 043 7872 ID for all events

To access Zoom go to www.zoom.us<<http://www.zoom.us>>

If you wish to join on the landline telephone, please dial: 0203 481 5237 and when asked, put in the Meeting ID 458 043 7872

You might be asked to enter hash at the end also (bottom right button on phone dial). The call may be charged at a local rate, however if, like many people, you have a free calls package it will Probably be free. If in doubt, please check with your phone provider.

Using BABL

People will be dialled in so please get in touch to be added to the meeting. Your phone will ring at the time of the session and when you answer your phone, you will be asked to press the hash (#) key and you will be in the session. Alternatively, you can dial 0330 606 1118; the room code is 436173 just after the stated time of the event. Please dial in if you have Call Guardian on your phone, DO NOT disable it to access these sessions. The call is free from landlines but not mobiles.

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March 2021

Tues 2 nd	2pm	Poetry and Literature Hour with Julie	Zoom
Tues 2 nd	2pm	Sedbergh Community Group	BABL Meeting
Wed 3 rd	10am	Tech Know How - Assistive Technology	Zoom
Thurs 4 th	7pm	BABL at Bedtime	BABL Meeting
Fri 5 th	10am	Coffee Morning Quiz with Mr Quizzoh	Zoom
Mon 8 th	2pm	Kendal Community Group	BABL Meeting
Tues 9 th	2pm	Poetry and Literature Hour with Julie	Zoom
Thurs 11 th	7pm	BABL at Bedtime	BABL Meeting
Fri 12 th	10am	Coffee Morning Quiz with Mr Quizzoh	Zoom
Fri 12 th	7.30pm	Easter Bingo online via Zoom £5 per entry Wine, Easter Eggs and cash Prizes. For entry email: aileen@sightadvice.org.uk or phone :01539 769055	
Mon 15 th	10.30am	Arnside Community Group	BABL Meeting
Tues 16 th	2pm	Poetry and Literature Hour with Julie	Zoom
Tues 16 th	2pm	Sedbergh Community Group	BABL Meeting
Wed 17 th	10am	Tech Know How - Assistive Technology	Zoom
Thurs 18 th	7pm	BABL at Bedtime	BABL Meeting
Fri 19 th	10am	Coffee Morning Quiz with Mr Quizzoh	Zoom
Sun 21 st		Start of our Online Arts and Crafts Auction For information email: aileen@sightadvice.org.uk or phone 01539 769055	
Tues 23 rd	2pm	Poetry and Literature Hour with Julie	Zoom
Thurs 25 th	11am	Kendal and District AMD Group. Contact Jackie, at Sight Advice, who will pass on your details to the Group Leader	
Thurs 25 th	7pm	BABL at Bedtime	BABL Meeting
Fri 26 th	2pm	Coffee Morning Quiz with Mr Quizzoh	Zoom
Tues 30 th	2pm	Poetry and Literature Hour with Julie	Zoom

March 2021

Tues 30th 2pm Sedbergh Community Group BABL Meeting

Wed 31st 10am Tech Know How - Assistive Technology Zoom

April 2021

Good Friday 2nd April Office Closed

Easter Monday 5th April Office Closed

Tues 6th 2pm Poetry and Literature Hour with Julie Zoom

Thurs 8th 7pm BABL at Bedtime BABL Meeting

Fri 9th 10am Coffee Morning Quiz with Mr Quizzoh Zoom

Mon 12th 2pm Kendal Community Group BABL Meeting

Tue 13th 2pm Poetry and Literature Hour with Julie Zoom

Tues 13th 2pm Sedbergh Community Group BABL Meeting

Wed 14th 10am Tech Know How - Assistive Technology Zoom

Thurs 15th 7pm BABL at Bedtime BABL Meeting

Fri 16th 10am Coffee Morning Quiz with Mr Quizzoh Zoom

Mon 19th 10.30am Arnside Community Group BABL Meeting

Tues 20th 2pm Poetry and Literature Hour with Julie Zoom

Thurs 22nd 7pm BABL at Bedtime BABL Meeting

Fri 23rd 4pm Coffee Morning Quiz with Mr Quizzoh Zoom

Tues 27th 2pm Poetry and Literature Hour with Julie Zoom

Tues 27th 2pm Sedbergh Community Group BABL Meeting

Wed 28th 10am Tech Know How - Assistive Technology Zoom

Thurs 29th 11am Kendal and District AMD Group. Contact Jackie at Sight Advice who can pass on your details to the Group Leader

Thurs 29th 7pm BABL at Bedtime BABL Meeting

Fri 30th 10am Coffee Morning Quiz with Mr Quizzoh Zoom

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May 2021

Early May Bank Holiday Monday May 3rd Office Closed

Tues 4 th	2pm	Poetry and Literature Hour with Julie	Zoom
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Thurs 6 th	7pm	BABL at Bedtime	BABL Meeting
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Fri 7 th	10am	Coffee Morning Quiz with Mr Quizzoh	Zoom
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Mon 10 th	2pm	Kendal Community Group	BABL Meeting
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Tues 11 th	2pm	Poetry and Literature Hour with Julie	Zoom
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Tues 11 th	2pm	Sedbergh Community Group	BABL Meeting
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Wed 12 th	10am	Tech Know How - Assistive Technology	Zoom
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Thurs 13 th	7pm	BABL at Bedtime	BABL Meeting
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Mon 17 th	10.30am	Arnside Community Group	BABL Meeting
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Tues 18 th	2pm	Poetry and Literature Hour with Julie	Zoom
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Thurs 20 th	7pm	BABL at Bedtime	BABL Meeting
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Fri 21 st	10am	Coffee Morning Quiz with Mr Quizzoh	Zoom
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Tues 25 th	2pm	Poetry and Literature Hour with Julie	Zoom
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Tues 25 th	2pm	Sedbergh Community Group	BABL Meeting
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Wed 26 th	10am	Tech Know How - Assistive Technology	Zoom
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Thurs 27 th	11am	Kendal and District AMD Group. Contact Jackie at Sight Advice who can pass on your details to the Group Leader	
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Thurs 27 th	7pm	BABL at Bedtime	BABL Meeting
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Fri 28 th	10am	Coffee Morning Quiz with Mr Quizzoh	Zoom
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Spring Bank Holiday Monday May 31st Office Closed

At the time of writing this we are in a third national lockdown, although it may be that, by the time you get to read this, things will be easing. We're pleased to say that we have been able to continue to support people with sight loss in their communities throughout the pandemic, although sometimes the kind of support has had to be amended to conform to Government guidance.



Telephone support

While we are currently not able to visit people at home, we continue to offer assessments to people over the phone. These telephone assessments enable us to offer advice and support and to refer people to other services as needed. If people would benefit from aids and equipment to help them remain as independent as possible, we're able to arrange this for them or direct them to places where they can get these for themselves. If you, or someone you know, has sight loss and would like to find out if we can help, please ring us at The Bradbury Centre on 01539 769055. Our phone lines are open as normal 9.30am to 4.00pm Mondays to Thursdays.



Low vision assessments

While the Low Vision Clinics hosted by us at The Bradbury Centre have had to be suspended, we are able to offer an alternative approach. People, who would have been referred to the clinic, are offered telephone based low vision assessments and advice. Where the need for low vision aids is identified, we have been able to deliver or post these to people. We've had a lot of success with this approach so if you have sight loss and think you might benefit from advice or low vision aids such as magnifiers or overglasses, please get in touch.

Talking books and newspapers

Talking books have been a lifeline for many in the last year and we

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continue to help people apply to join talking book libraries like RNIB and Calibre. Calibre had a short closure over the Christmas period but are now back up and running again. The popular talking version of the Westmorland Gazette, produced by South Lakes Talking Newspaper, is operating as usual after its temporary online reading in partnership with Sight Advice South Lakes.

Support groups and social activities

Our face-to-face support groups and social activities have had to be suspended in line with Government guidance. However, we have been able to offer online and telephone alternatives to these which have been popular.

We use Zoom to bring people together for events such as talks, poetry readings, quizzes and bingo. A person would ordinarily use a laptop, tablet or phone with online access to take part in these sessions, however there is the ability to dial in to sessions using just your landline. Members have dialled in very successfully in this way to join the Poetry sessions on Tuesday afternoon, for example.

For those without this technology, we have started using the BABL system. With BABL, people wishing to join a group or activity give us consent to ring their telephone landline. At the time of the group or activity, the BABL system makes telephone calls to the landlines of participants. There are no call charges for this. All people need to do to join the group is to pick up their phone and press the # key (under the number 9 on the phone). We've had BABL meetings for the Sedbergh, Arnside, Windermere and Kendal groups and people tell us they enjoy being able to hear from and speak to others. These groups are continuing to meet in this way so, if you would like to join these meetings, do get in touch and let us know. We can add your number to the membership list.

At the time of writing this, we are also starting a new session called BABL at Bedtime. Volunteer readers are reading a short story every week, on Thursdays at 7pm. We know how popular literature and audiobooks have been during this time and this is our way of making it social and allowing you to share in listening to a story with fellow people in your community. Do get in touch to find out

more and to add your number to the calling list. One thing to note is that just because your number is called you do not have to answer that call every week if it is not convenient.

Circles

Naturally, in the current circumstances none of us are allowed to go out into the community to attend groups or perhaps participate in a hobby. If, however, there is an activity than you would be keen on pursuing it may be that there are on line versions of that activity available. For instance, there are online choirs, craft groups, book clubs & even theatre productions. Have a word with us to see if we can support you in accessing these or even try something new! If, indeed, you are a volunteer and you would be keen to support an individual in reaching for their goals, either online or eventually in the community, then we would love to hear from you.

We're pleased that we have been able to continue to support people. If you, or someone you know, has sight loss and you think we may be able to help, or you just want to find out what we can offer, please ring us on 01539 769055. We're keen to help if we can.

Products to help you in the kitchen

Peter Knock

Preparing snacks and meals in the kitchen can present a challenge for people with sight loss. They might not feel safe using knives and handling hot pans. Here are some tips and product ideas that might help you use your kitchen safely.



Getting organised - Try to keep crockery, utensils and food ingredients in the same places in your kitchen so they are easier to find. Make your own large print labels to mark food items. You could also consider getting a Penfriend to label items. This will tell you what an item is when you touch the label with the Penfriend. Talking tin lids can also be used. Organise your ingredients so they are to hand when preparing meals. Use a bowl or bin nearby for peelings to keep your work area tidy.



Good lighting can help you see to prepare meals. Your kitchen needs bright central lighting to keep the ambient light levels up and task lighting near your work surfaces. Task lights could include lights under cupboards, clip on spotlights or table lamps to light the areas where you do your food preparation.



Cutting boards and mixing bowls in different colours - These can provide good colour contrast with the food and ingredients you are handling. Some cutting boards have rubber underneath to stop them slipping or you can put cutting boards and mixing bowls on non-slip mats, so they don't move around.



Care with knives - To keep the sharp side of the knife pointed downwards, try to use a knife with flat blunt side and curved cutting side so you can tell which way up it needs to be. You could try using a pizza cutter rather than a knife when chopping some ingredients.

Care with hot water - You can use a Liquid level indicator to tell when a cup, bowl or jug is nearly full of liquid. If you are boiling water in a pan, use a Water Boil Alert Disc (£5.99 from RNIB). You put this in the pan with the water, it will rattle letting you know when the water boils.





Using a cooker - When putting pans on a stove, turn the handles inwards (but not over a burner). This helps you to avoid accidentally catching them when moving around the kitchen.



You can get brightly coloured handles to put on existing saucepans, so they stand out more. Use a mesh basket in a saucepan when cooking vegetables. This prevents you having to carry the pan and tip it in a sink to drain them.

Fit bumpons on settings on microwaves and cookers. You can use a torch to see controls better.

Talking kitchen aids - A range of talking aids are available including talking kitchen scales, talking measuring jugs, talking microwaves, talking thermometers and talking timers.

If you would like to know about any of the above, please contact the Sight Advice South Lakes office on 01539 769055.

**Peter Knock
Community Development Officer**

Children and Young People's Project Alicia Makinson

As a project we have continued to support all members and their families by telephone calls, Zoom calls and through organised virtual activities. Unfortunately, we were not able to attend our Annual Theatre trip this year, which, I know, was a great disappointment to many. However, some of our families took the opportunity to get together virtually before Christmas to watch a live audio described production of 'A Christmas Carol' staged at The Old Vic in London. What a wonderful experience this was. A lovely way to begin our festive celebrations and I know that a kind donation of popcorn and hot chocolate went down a treat!





Some of our children, young people and their families also had a great time getting together online for a Christmas Craft session. Craft packs were delivered to their doorsteps and we agreed a time to meet. Thank you to all who took part.

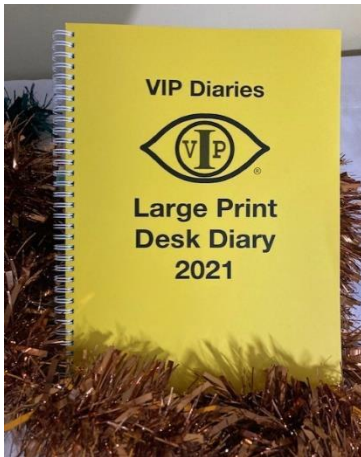
Looking ahead, I am making plans and organising activities for when we can eventually get back together again. If any of you have any wonderful ideas that you would like to do in the months to come, please do contact me.

For those who aren't as aware of the Children and Young People's Project, we support children and young people aged 0-18 with a visual impairment or sight loss. Siblings and parents are also involved through the project. Members have the opportunity to develop friendships, challenge themselves, push their boundaries and most of all have FUN! Our young people are also given lots of opportunity to talk and represent people living with Sight Loss. If you, or someone you know, would benefit and would like to find out more, please do contact me. I would love to hear from you.

Alicia can be contacted on 01539 769055

Email: alicia@sightadvice.org.uk

Don't Panic ... it's not too late!!!



We still have stock of 2021 diaries and calendars now at a discounted price. Please give us a call on 01539 726613 or email us info@vipdiaries.co.uk and we will be in touch to discuss your order.

It's been a huge time of change for VIP Diaries in 2020, a new location (now based at the Bradbury Centre within Sight Advice) a new manager – Laura Garnett and a new team of volunteers, whose tremendous support helped us make sure every single order placed before Christmas was sent out.

We really couldn't have achieved what we did without our Volunteers. We would like to thank them sincerely and also our customers, who were incredibly understanding of delays caused by our need to operate under restrictions due to Covid-19.

We are now planning for the future. We have heard time and time again from our customers across the UK that there is a demand for certain products, which aren't always readily available or easily purchased by visually impaired people.

This year we are looking at the suggestions we have heard, with a view to a broader retail range as well as retaining all the favourites such as diaries and calendars.

If you've any ideas or comments on products we stock currently or you'd like to see us stock a particular item please get in touch.

Email us at info@vipdiaries.co.uk

Finally, we want to keep everyone informed about opportunities, offers and our new product range which may be of use to you throughout the year, so we are launching our own VIP Social Media accounts on Facebook and Twitter. If you use social media please search for us, say hello and add us to your favourites.

Laura, Aileen and the VIP Diaries Team.

Eye Clinic Liaison Officer

Jackie Bateman

As the pandemic continues, the Eye Clinic Liaison Officer (ECLO) service is still very much continuing. At the time of writing (January 2021) we are currently working from home and supporting patients who attend Westmorland General Hospital via telephone and online.



As we work remotely, we very much depend on referrals from hospital staff but would like to emphasize that individuals are most welcome to contact us for support too. ECLOs can advise on eye conditions and treatment, equipment and low vision aids, COVID-19 precautions within the eye clinics as well as signposting to other services and much more.

If you wish to contact the ECLO then do please call us on 01539 769055 (via Sight Advice South Lakes) or email: Jackie.bateman@mbht.nhs.uk

Plans are afoot to return to Westmorland General Hospital when it is appropriate. We plan to be based adjacent to the lifts on Level 4 (just outside the AMD eye clinic) owing to reduced permitted numbers in the eye clinic itself but hope that we will be available to patients whilst they wait for, or following, their appointments. Should you require support but attend the eye clinics when we are not available, then please ask the clinic staff to send in a referral and we will be in touch as soon as we are able.

Sight Advice South Lakes Team

<p><u>Sight Advice South Lakes Team</u></p> <p><i>Chief Executive</i> Claire Park</p> <p><i>Sight Support Coordinator (Assistive Technology)</i> Tim Ward</p> <p><i>Sight Support Coordinator (Community Development)</i> Peter Knock</p> <p><i>Sight Support Coordinator (Community Development)</i> Jackie Bateman</p> <p><i>Volunteer Support Officer</i> Julie Halford</p>	<p><i>Young People and Children’s Coordinator</i> Alicia Makinson</p> <p><i>Sight Support Advisers</i> Sarah Stoddard Krystyna Slosarska</p> <p><i>Eye Clinic Liaison Officer</i> Jackie Bateman Sarah Stoddard</p> <p><i>Finance Officer</i> Emma Barker</p> <p><i>Fundraising Coordinator</i> Aileen Ward</p> <p><i>Housekeeping</i> Diane Boulder</p>
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Promoting independent living

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