



Spring 2022
Magazine

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Chief Executive's Update

Claire Park

Welcome to our Spring magazine.

I hope I find our readers and their families safe and well.

I am delighted to inform our readers that we are once again operational. It has been wonderful to see familiar faces visiting us once again. Please do pop in if you are passing. The Bradbury Centre is open, social groups have recommenced and home visits are available. If you need support, please do get in touch; we are here for you.



I would like to thank all those who gave very generously to our request for donations in place of raffle tickets and 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. We received £565 in donations from our Winter appeal. We also received a number of other generous donations from our supporters over the festive period.

Late September we said goodbye to Peter Knock, Community Development Coordinator. Peter and his wife made the decision to relocate to Penwortham, Lancashire; we wish them all the best in

their retirement. In January, we welcomed Jude Rogers to the Charity and you can learn a little more about Jude on page 10. To further advance the support we offer to people living with a visual impairment we have developed our relationship with Cumbria University and are now able to offer work placement opportunities to Occupational Therapy students. Our first student, Claire, will be joining us for 8 weeks in late February.

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 – hopefully we will be able to feel the warmth of the sun on our faces soon.

Assistive Technology

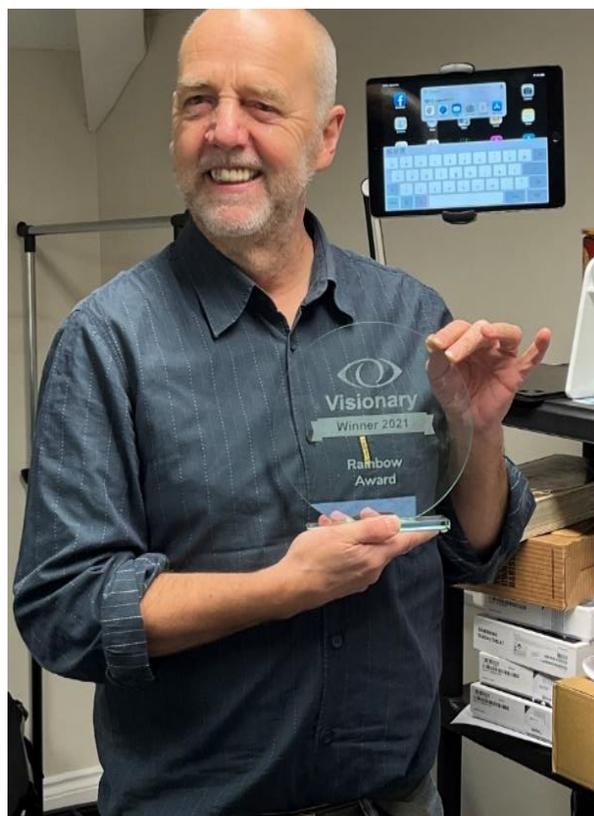
Tim Ward

Where do we start this article?!

Some of you will have seen in the Westmorland Gazette that Sight Advice South Lakes “Future Vision” collaboration with six other sight loss organisations won the Visionary UK national Rainbow Award.

Visionary is the national membership organisation for local sight loss charities. The Visionary Network have over 116 local sight loss organisations in the UK, and 21 national partners, and it was those organisations who voted Future Vision the winner!

The award highlights the organisations and individuals who have been a “rainbow” in the pandemic, through being open and generous, sharing knowledge, challenges, their staff time and practical information and examples of what has worked for them. Sight Advice are the regular hosts on



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Zoom, and, with the other 6 organisations, we source speakers or put on demonstrations.

Speakers from the UK, Republic of Ireland, Spain and the USA queued to demonstrate their Assistive Technology for sight loss, knowing the group has one of the best regular online audiences in the country.

Thank you to everyone in the South Lakes who has attended an online event. For those of you who may be interested in joining but may not know how to, please get in touch and I will be happy to help you.

Taira Technology

In January this year, we had an excellent Zoom session with Omar and Mo Iqbal of Taira Technology. Taira Technology is a family company (some members of which are visually impaired themselves) who provide advice on purchasing accessible laptops, computers, phones, braille devices and much more. If you are thinking of purchasing any form of technology Taira, can give excellent advice or purchase the product on your behalf, plus they have packages offering ongoing technological support at the end of a phone and through your computer or tablet at home!

To find out more visit <https://tairatech.com/products/> or telephone 03432 897501

Upcoming Assistive Technology Event:

We are delighted to announce that Richard Bowring of Associated Optical will be at Sight Advice South Lakes on Wednesday 11th March to demonstrate a full range of electronic magnification and anti-glare glasses. Please come and join us between 10am and 2pm at the Bradbury Centre (Sight Advice).

If you purchase on the day, there are some amazing savings that Sight Advice have agreed with Richard, including:

Smartlux 5” - £399 on the day	(£590 on website save £191)
Visolux HD 7” - £550 on the day	(£780 on website save £230)
Visolux XL 12” - £999 on the day	(£1,449 on website save £500)

Vario FHD 16” - £1,650 on the day (£2,050 on website save £400)

Best to make an appointment on 01539 769055 but also feel free to pop in if you are just curious. Richard will happily demonstrate the products.

Product in Focus - Navilens

Navilens (www.navilens.com):

In this edition I would like to specifically mention Javier Pita, Chief Executive of Navilens, based in Barcelona, who gave an excellent demonstration of this game-changing technology at one of our Future Vision Zooms.

So what is Navilens? Navilens is a navigation and labelling app.

Basically it's a code that can be read by your smartphone or tablet from up to 40 feet away, even while you are walking! There is a Navilens label outside Sight Advice and if you have the app turned on while you walk by it will read out "Sight Advice South Lakes, 116 Highgate, Kendal" and tell you how far away you are.



What are the implications of this? Well, potentially huge. Kellogg's are starting to label their products, I believe Special K is now coded, as well as some shampoo products. Eventually of course, most products will employ this type of code so that when you are in the supermarket you can scan the shelves and your phone will say something like "Kellogg's Special K, £2.49". For those who want more information about calories or contents etc, for instance, this is also available.

In Barcelona and New York, amongst other cities, these codes are now in train and bus stations and can be used to inform passengers which platform they are on and when the next bus or train is due.

Sight Advice South Lakes are also going to work with a local museum to label their display items and add descriptions including dates and artists. This is especially useful given that there is also

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one other trick this code has. If you are, for example, a foreign tourist, the code automatically translates to the language of your phone. So, if you went to Barcelona bus station, the code would read in English! If a person from Spain goes to one of our local museums, the code will read in Spanish!

The emphasis is on businesses, companies, governments etc. to produce the content for the code labels; all we have to do is download the app to our phones or tablets. It is early days in the development of Navilens, but this has huge potential and Sight Advice will be there to help kick-start this in Cumbria. For information, here is link to a video of the presentation that Javier delivered to Sight Advice in 2021:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YqJmug-fVng>

Community Support

Jackie Bateman

Our community support team is once more meeting people face to face in the community and in people's homes. We are here at the Bradbury Centre to provide advice and support for those people with sight impairments of any kind as well as their families, friends and carers.



We can support you on a number of levels from a quick query which can be dealt with by our Sight Support Coordinators to more complex issues. Jude (Community Development Officer), Jackie (Community Development Officer) or Tim (Assistive Technology Officer) can offer further advice either over the phone, face to face at the Bradbury Centre or we can visit you at home if required. Alternatively, you could pop into the Bradbury Centre on Highgate (Monday - Thursday, 9.30am-4pm) to have a chat. We have a selection of aids and equipment on display for you to 'try before you buy' and we can also give you purchasing information about equipment. In addition, we can offer advice about local and national services available to help support you. Jackie, Jude and Tim are available to discuss matters but it is better if you phone ahead to ensure they are available.

We are also looking at reinstating our local support groups - two of which are now being run face to face. Please contact us if you wish to attend.

We continue to offer a Low Vision Clinic every six weeks organised by Galloways. If you are struggling to read your post and feel that you would benefit from a magnifier via the Low Vision Clinic then do contact us. You will be asked, however, to ensure that your spectacles are up to date when you attend the clinic to make sure the appropriate magnifier is prescribed.

Local Support Groups:

Our Sight Advice local support groups will be reopening over the coming months and we are eager to welcome new members or, for those who have previously attended, we would love to see you come back. We are still putting together plans for Spring and Summer but here is a list of our local groups and where they will meet. If you would like to attend one of our groups, please get in touch.

Kendal Support Group: Accessible venue to be confirmed

Ambleside Support Group: Accessible venue to be confirmed

Kirkby Lonsdale Support Group: Kirkby Lonsdale Methodist Church Hall

Arnside & Milnthorpe Group: Arnside Methodist Church

Sedbergh Support Group: Sedbergh People's Hall

Windermere Support Group: Goodly Dale Cottage Homes Lounge, Goodly Dale, Windermere

Dual Sensory Loss Group: Accessible venue to be confirmed

Help with utilities and bills (United Utilities):

Do you struggle to read your water or electricity bill? Are you concerned about receiving adequate support in the event of a disruption to water, electricity or gas? Are you concerned about home fuel costs?

If you answered 'yes' to any of the questions above, the Priority Services team at United Utilities may be able to help. This specialised service aims to register people living with impairments, disabilities or who may be vulnerable so that they can receive

priority support. This team are also able to advise on payments and making billing more accessible.

For more information please contact Jackie or Jude here at Sight Advice.

Walking Group Update

Julie Halford

It has been said many times over the last two years, how fortunate we are in living in a county with such lovely scenery and great walks. Sometimes getting access to the countryside is not easy, due to lack of transport, confidence, company and knowledge of safe routes. If this sounds like you, have you considered joining our Walking Group?

The Walking Group is a friendly volunteer led group which meets once a month during the, hopefully, weather friendly months. Transport can be arranged to and from the walking starting points and everyone has their own guide during the walk. The walks are on average 3 miles and there is usually a stop for sandwiches and cake.

You may wonder if the group is right for you, especially after the lack of movement we have all suffered during Lockdown. Sheila, the group leader, is more than happy to have a chat with you, perhaps even meet up beforehand, to reassure you the walks are suitable for you and to give you the confidence to join the group for the first time.



Please do get in touch with us if you want to find out more and we will put you in touch with Sheila.

Walking Programme:

13 April 2022 - Cartmel Park

18 May 2022 - Rydal

8 June 2022 - Elterwater

13 July 2022 - Bolton le Sands Canal & Shore

Volunteering Update

Julie Halford

“Although the world is full of suffering, it is also full of the overcoming of it.” — Helen Keller

This seems like a suitably appropriate quote to illustrate what we have gone through and, indeed, are still going through. There is no doubt it has been a difficult time for everyone, with so many changes and adaptations to what we probably took for granted as our life. And yet I have seen the compassion, kindness and consideration our volunteers have shown and continue to show throughout this time and it has been a privilege.



Our volunteers are the scaffolding of our community and you may not know this but around a third of our volunteers are visually impaired themselves. These volunteers are invested in their community and help it to thrive. They assist people by sharing their stories and getting involved in fundraising, supporting the community groups, raising awareness and offering one to one support.

Have you ever thought of becoming a volunteer but talked yourself out of it? “They wouldn’t be interested in me. I’m too old, too young, too boring, don’t have the time, too shy, too stuck in my ways. They seem to get on alright, too much like work.....”

Get rid of all those misconceptions and have a confidential chat with me about why you should and how you can volunteer with Sight Advice.

You may have a story to share which will help other people. You may have a talent and, or hobby which people would like to hear about. Your experience and skills may benefit the charity in other ways; for instance, people have supported our fundraising teams with their skills and time. It could be that you have a great local network and you could help to raise awareness of Sight Advice and how we can support people in your community. Volunteering with us does not have to be time and place bound as volunteers have created their own roles with us and are supported and appreciated by all of the team. Volunteering not only enhances the lives of others, it can also improve your physical and mental wellbeing and so, if nothing else, you owe it to yourself. It could be the best decision you make this year!

Winter Well-being Visits

Volunteer Daisy has come forward to offer winter well-being visits to any of our clients who may be struggling with loneliness, isolation, emotional health issues or who would simply benefit from some company and some straightforward advice around healthy living. Daisy is offering simple and generic advice around rest, relaxation, diet, breathing and mild-exercise. Daisy will refer back to Sight Advice if there are any sight-related issues that come out of these visits and will always encourage individuals to seek the advice of their GP for specific health-related problems.

Please get in touch if you would like more information and to have an initial chat with Daisy.

New Community Development Officer

Judith Rogers

Hello everyone

My name is Judith Rogers (otherwise known as Jude) and I joined Sight Advice in mid-January in the role of Community Development Officer. I work two days a week, on a Monday and Wednesday. Prior to joining Sight Advice, I worked with Carer Support South Lakes for 12 months. I am enjoying working with my new colleagues at SASL and getting up to speed with everything. I have had the pleasure of talking to several of our clients so far and look forward to getting to know many more of you in the coming months. I will be supporting the Kendal Community Group Meetings from February onwards.



I am a newcomer to Cumbria, having moved here with my family from Oxfordshire, back in March 2020, only a week before the first lockdown. There are many places I am looking forward to exploring this year, either on foot or in a kayak (once the lakes have warmed up a bit!).

Babl is now discontinued, but we have an identical system called MeetUpCall. This system will still enable us to call out to landlines free of charge to you.

Unless otherwise stated, all activities and events take place using Zoom or MeetUpCall have the capability for you to telephone in to join. The event will state which application it uses.

Using Zoom

Unless stated just click this link to access Sight Advice Zoom Meetings:

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

Alternatively go to the Zoom website and use the following meeting ID for all events **458 043 7872**

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

Also, you might be asked to enter hash at the end (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 MeetUpCall (previously BABL)

People will be dialled in automatically, so please get in touch to be added to the meeting. Your phone will ring at the time of the session, answer your phone and you will be asked to press 1 and you are in the session.

Alternatively, you can dial 0800 072 8452 from a landline and enter room code 172 272 76 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.

MARCH

Tues 1st	2pm	Sedbergh Community Group meeting: MeetUpCall
Tues 1st	2pm	Dual Sensory Loss Group meeting: SASL (The Bradbury Centre)
Thurs 3rd	7pm	Book @ Bedtime: MeetUpCall
Fri 4th	10am	Coffee Morning Quiz with Mr Quizoh: Zoom
Thurs 10th	10am	Windermere Community Group meeting: Goodly Dale Centre, Windermere
Thurs 10th	10am	Living Well: How to make the most of life with sight loss: Zoom
Thurs 10th	4pm	Kendal Games Group meeting: SASL
Thurs 10th	4pm	100 Club March Draw
Fri 11th	10am-2pm	Associated Optics Demonstration & Technology Drop-in: SASL
Fri 11th	10am	Coffee Morning Quiz with Mr Quizoh: Zoom
Mon 14th	2pm	Kendal Community Group meeting: MeetUpCall
Mon 14th	6:30pm	Quiz Night & Fundraiser for SASL: Kendal Golf Club
Tues 15th	2pm	Sedbergh Community Group meeting: Sedbergh People's Hall
Wed 16th	10:30am	Walking Group Volunteers Refresher Training: Cunswick Scar
Thurs 17th	10:30am	Coffee Morning & Sight Loss Presentation: Hallgarth Community Centre
Thurs 17th	7pm	Book @ Bedtime: MeetUpCall
Fri 18th	10am	Coffee Morning Quiz with Mr Quizoh: Zoom
Mon 21st	10:30am	Arnside & Milnthorpe Community Group meeting: Arnside Methodist Church
Thurs 24th	10am	Future Vision Assistive Technology Workshop: Zoom
Thurs 24th	2pm	Kendal Games Group meeting: SASL
Thurs 24th	7pm	Book @ Bedtime: MeetUpCall
Fri 25th	10am	Coffee Morning Quiz with Mr Quizoh: Zoom
Sat 26th	10am – 12pm	Spring Fayre & Coffee Morning: Kendal Unitarian Chapel

Sat 26 th	2pm	Afternoon High Tea: Kendal Unitarian Chapel
Sat 26 th	ALL DAY	Street Collection in Kendal – volunteers welcome!
Thurs 31 st	7pm	Book @ Bedtime: MeetUpCall
APRIL		
Thurs 1 st	10am	Coffee Morning Quiz with Mr Quizoh: Zoom
Tues 5 th	2pm	Sedbergh Community Group meeting: MeetUpCall
Tues 5 th	2pm	Dual Sensory Loss Group meeting: SASL
Thurs 7 th	2pm	Kendal Games Group meeting: SASL (The Bradbury Centre)
Thurs 7 th	10am	Coffee Morning Quiz with Mr Quizoh: Zoom
Fri 8 th	10am	Coffee Morning Quiz with Mr Quizoh: Zoom
Mon 11 th	11am	Kendal Community Group meeting and Coffee Morning: Venue TBC
Wed 13 th	9:30am	Walking Group: Cartmel Park
Thurs 14 th	10am	Windermere Community Group meeting: Goodly Dale Centre, Windermere
Thurs 14 th	10am	Living Well: How to make the most of life with sight loss: Zoom
Thurs 14 th	4pm	100 Club April Draw
Thurs 14 th	7pm	Book @ Bedtime: MeetUpCall
Fri 15 th	10am	Coffee Morning Quiz with Mr Quizoh: Zoom
Mon 18 th	10:30am	Arnside & Milnthorpe Community Group meeting: Arnside Methodist Church
Tues 19 th	2pm	Sedbergh Community Group meeting: Sedbergh People's Hall
Thurs 21 st	2pm	Kendal Community Group meeting: MeetUpCall
Thurs 21 st	7pm	Book @ Bedtime: MeetUpCall
Fri 22 nd	10am	Coffee Morning Quiz with Mr Quizoh: Zoom
Sun 24 th	6pm	Start of the Spring Auction: Facebook – contact Aileen for more information
Thurs 28 th	10am	Future Vision Assistive Technology Workshop: Zoom

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Thurs 28th	7pm	Book @ Bedtime: MeetUpCall
Fri 29th	10am	Coffee Morning Quiz with Mr Quizoh: Zoom
MAY		
Sun 1st	8:30pm	Closing of the Spring Auction: Facebook – contact Aileen for more information
Tues 3rd	2pm	Sedbergh Community Group meeting: MeetUpCall
Tues 3rd	2pm	Dual Sensory Loss Group meeting: SASL (The Bradbury Centre)
Thurs 5th	2pm	Kendal Games Group meeting: SASL (The Bradbury Centre)
Thurs 5th	7pm	Book @ Bedtime: MeetUpCall
Fri 6th	10am	Coffee Morning Quiz with Mr Quizoh: Zoom
Mon 9th	11am	Kendal Community Group meeting and Coffee Morning: Venue TBC
Thurs 12th	10am	Windermere Community Group meeting: Goodly Dale Centre, Windermere
Thurs 12th	10am	Living Well: How to make the most of life with sight loss: Zoom
Thurs 12th	4pm	100 Club May Draw
Thurs 12th	7pm	Book @ Bedtime: MeetUpCall
Fri 13th	10am	Coffee Morning Quiz with Mr Quizoh: Zoom
Mon 16th	10:30am	Arnside & Milnthorpe Community Group meeting: Arnside Methodist Church
Tues 17th	2pm	Sedbergh Community Group meeting: Sedbergh People's Hall
Wed 18th	9:30am	Walking Group: Rydal
Thurs 19th	2pm	Kendal Games Group meeting: SASL (The Bradbury Centre)
Thurs 19th	7pm	Book @ Bedtime: MeetUpCall
Fri 20th	10am	Coffee Morning Quiz with Mr Quizoh: Zoom
Thurs 26th	10am	Future Vision Assistive Technology Workshop: Zoom
Thurs 26th	7pm	Book @ Bedtime: MeetUpCall
Fri 27th	10am	Coffee Morning Quiz with Mr Quizoh: Zoom

Hello and a big thank you to those of you who responded to our Winter Appeal this year. In total we raised £565! Thank you so much for your support.



A special thank you also goes to our wonderful supporters and volunteers who held a variety of sponsored events over the winter. This included Diane's Birthday Fundraiser on Facebook (£170 raised), John and James' Pool Competition (£350 raised) and our fabulous Miriam's efforts on her now completed, one-year, sponsored walk, raising over £1000 for local charities. One quarter of this was raised for Sight Advice South Lakes. We also received a generous donation of £165 from Nickels and Dimes Line Dancing Group.

A big thank you to everyone for their support especially during these times!

Congratulations to the winner of our first £50.00 '100 Club' Xmas Special. This was Andrew of A2A Websites. Andrew also provides support for our VIP Diaries website.

It is not too late to join the 100 Club as we have a few numbers left. Each share is £12 and if you would like to join, please contact me at Sight Advice to be in with a chance of winning our monthly cash prize draw!

Coming in the Spring...

March

At the time of going to press restrictions are being lifted so we are happy to announce that our Quiz and Supper Night (postponed in January) will go ahead at Kendal Golf Club on Monday 14th March. Tickets are available from Sight Advice and cost £5 per person, which includes supper.

Please keep watch on our Facebook page for the Bingo and Quiz events being advertised in April. If you don't use Facebook, please let me know and I will add you to our Fundraising Community email list (as I send advance details out to people who have attended or are interested in events).

The lovely month of March sees us hosting "A Celebration of Spring" day on Saturday 26th March at Kendal Unitarian Chapel.

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We have planned a Spring Fayre and Coffee Morning, followed by an Afternoon High Tea, with fabulous clotted cream and strawberry jam on scones included! Please join us for either or both! We have also organised a street collection in Kendal that day.

The Coffee Morning/Spring Fayre 10am to 12noon will be held at the Unitarian Chapel on Branthwaite Brow just off the Market Place in Kendal and subject to weather we hope to host the High Tea (2pm-4pm) in the serene and very lovely chapel garden see ‘What’s On’ for more details.

Anyone who would like to help, by baking, creating crafts, serving at the coffee morning, or the High Tea, helping on a stall or being part of our street collection team that day for an hour would be very welcome. Please let Aileen or Eileen know.

April and May

Our fabulous online Auction returns, with the theme this time being “Fresh Start and New Beginnings” - a theme we can relate to in Spring!

If you would like to register for the auction, simply join us on our Facebook Page to access the event starting on Sunday 24th April and ending on Sunday May 1st. If you do not use Facebook please let me know as we have accessible options available to help you take part.

The income generated through these auctions is vital for helping fund Sight Advice services. The auction has proved hugely popular and we would love your help in collecting items to be auctioned. Perhaps you would like to create an item for this (arts, crafts, jewellery). You might make a personal pledge or you may know an artist, beautician or hairdresser who may be able to offer a gift to auction. If so, please get in touch. Alternatively, if you would like to offer that old Rembrandt original currently sitting above the fireplace, we would be happy to accept! Your generosity is very much appreciated.

Speaking of the Auctions.... A Tale of Two Kitties

During the last online auction we hosted, a group of children from Levens C of E Primary School, led by Knitting Club lead, Sally Cowell, decided they wanted to donate items to our auction and support us in raising funds for Sight Advice. The group donated

two lovely, soft, handmade blankets created by the children and their leader.

One of the blankets was bought by our volunteer Glenys, who helps with our Support Desk at the charity and also creates craftwork for our fundraising. Glenys is also a volunteer at Animal Rescue Cumbria, in Kappellan and saw an opportunity to help the kittens there by offering them the homemade blanket. As



can be seen in the picture above, the cats took full advantage of this warm, clean, safe, snug blanket with a particular mother cat and kitten claiming it for their own! The great news is that both mother and kitten have now found a home.

Thank you to the children of Levens C of E School, and to our dedicated volunteer and supporter, Glenys!

Have a wonderful warm and gentle Spring everyone.

Volunteer in the Spotlight

Julie Halford

The volunteer spotlighted in this edition of our Magazine is probably someone who most people associated with Sight Advice know already. After all, she has been a registered volunteer with us for 28 years! What people probably don't know is just how much time she has given, the variety of roles undertaken, the number of people Eileen has supported, and just the plain energy and life force she has put into the organisation over those years. Eileen was one of the first people I met on my first day in this role. It was Volunteer's Week and I should have been recognising Eileen's support, however Eileen was helping me to decorate the meeting room and making sure everything was in place to welcome the volunteers to their afternoon tea. Eileen ensured that I felt welcomed and part of the team that day.



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I could take up most of the space in this Magazine with the things that Eileen has done with the organisation in the time she has been with us. Eileen is a driving force within the fundraising team, from organising the roster for street collections; being there on coffee mornings; decorating our tree in Kendal Parish Church at Christmas; making craft items for the stalls and auctions and supporting the VITAL group in all their activities - even driving the bus until recently. Eileen has also been the one responsible for corralling our famous pink elephants around the county, together with the much missed, Bill. Funds raised in this way are so significant to Sight Advice, as they are funds which can be used for the day to day running of the charity. This is something which it is difficult to get funding for and also enables us to fund special one-off projects.

Quite apart from raising much valued funds, all these activities bring people, volunteers, clients and businesses together and help to maintain and nurture the community of Sight Advice. Eileen has also supported health and well-being provision within Sight Advice, undertaking such roles as a guide within the Walking Group and more recently, as a reader with our Book At Bedtime event on Thursdays. During Lockdown, Eileen stayed in touch with people and with us, keeping those connections going and making sure people felt valued and supported. I know that we are not the only charity Eileen supports, quite apart from the bell ringing. I constantly feel in awe at all the plates that she juggles!

Aileen, our Community Fundraising Coordinator says, “What can I say about Eileen? WellI refer to her as my right hand woman” Her local knowledge and experience in fundraising and generous help over the years, since I came into post as Fundraising Coordinator, has been hugely appreciated. Great fun, adaptable, warm and kind are just a few words that spring to mind when I think about Eileen.

There have been times we have been doubled up with laughter at some escapades we’ve been up to in the name of fundraising for our charity and it’s a pleasure and a privilege to work alongside this lovely lady, ‘Our Eileen’, long may we continue to do so.”

Thank you, Eileen, for all that you have done and continue to do. You truly are appreciated!

The Coronavirus pandemic is well known to have made access to healthcare more difficult, with significant backlogs reported for appointments in primary and secondary care. Eye health access has been no different. As we hopefully move towards the later stages of the pandemic, there is a large cohort of people who are now more willing to attend routine appointments. As such, we are seeing an increase in the number of patients accessing eyecare services.



Both community and hospital eyecare services are open and running routine and emergency clinics. Keeping routine sight test and hospital eye clinic appointments through the pandemic is extremely important to avoid potential irreversible damage to sight due to lack of monitoring and intervention. Emergency appointments are available through your local community optical practice as they have always been, with prompt referral onwards to the hospital eye service if required.

While some patients will have asked for their appointments to be delayed, others may have been discharged from the hospital eye service due to non-attendance. If this is the case, (check with the hospital booking hub if in doubt) then a referral back to the required clinic can be requested, such as the glaucoma clinic or the diabetic eye screening service. This referral can be requested from your community optical practice or your GP surgery.

For those struggling to meet their visual requirements, the Low Vision Service is still assessing people. Referral to these clinics for lighting and low vision aids can be made by your community Optometrist.

With Covid restrictions reducing for the general population it should be remembered that in healthcare settings a face mask is still required to be worn by both staff and patients. Social distancing should also be observed. If you have any worries or concerns about attending appointments, then please speak to the practice or hospital eye department for further information and help.

It has truly been an exciting and busy few months in the Children and Young People's Project. Dancing, skiing, VI football sessions, independent housekeeping skills and film making just to name a few. Special thanks to Lucy Everett at Dance Attik, The Castle Green Hotel, Kendal United Football Club and Kendal Snowsports Club.



As you can see, as a project we have continued to build relationships within our local community and it has become evident that partnership working is one of the keys to success within the project.

As you may have read in our previous magazine, the funding for Children in Need came to an end on 31st December. As yet we have not been able to secure funding for the project but a number of grant applications have gone into local trusts and we are waiting to hear back. In the meantime, the Trustees for the Charity have agreed to fund some of the service costs from the Charity reserves.

I am continuing to provide normal support for our children and young people and I am currently planning the next few activities for the coming months.

As always do come and speak to me if you have any questions about the project or about your child's visual impairment. I am able to see people once again in the office or if it's more convenient to you, I can also undertake home visits.

We always welcome new referrals and this can be done by the parent/carer of the young person or, with permission, professionals can refer and speak to me directly. Please call 01539 769055 or email me at alicia@sightadvice.org.uk

Just before Christmas some of our older members came to the office for a 'Saturday Night Takeaway' event. Alongside enjoying pizzas, we marked the occasion making a few film clips of what Sight Advice South Lakes has meant to them. They also recorded some useful advice to share with other children and young people with a Visual Impairment. A wonderful evening was had by all. Below is a quote from one of our members.

“My advice for a young person with a visual impairment would be don’t be afraid to ask for help because help is there when you need it, through charities like Sight Advice or through people you’re close too. Don’t be scared to advocate for yourself and to tell people if you are struggling because visual impairment/sight loss can be a challenge and you will come across obstacles in life but that’s ok and if you advocate for yourself and tell people what you need then you will get through this. You are strong and you are a fighter and you’ve got this.”

Eye Clinic Liaison Update Jackie Bateman & Sarah Stoddard

The Eye Clinic Liaison Officers are back at Westmorland General Hospital and are available to give advice on daily living aids, lighting and other equipment as well as information about local and national services to which we can signpost you. Do come and say hello and have a chat, especially if something is bothering you about managing your eye condition. Similarly, if you feel you need support during your appointment then do please let us know. We can accompany you into your appointment and make sure you have a record of what was said afterwards.



We are based within the Macular Clinic on Level 4 on Mondays & Wednesdays but are now available to talk to if you are attending the Eye Outpatients Clinic on Level 2 on a Tuesday. We would be happy to chat and provide support about many topics. If you attend the hospital on any other day then do ask a member of staff to let us know you require support. Otherwise, please telephone 01539 769055 (Sight Advice South Lakes) and ask to speak to the ECLO. You can also email us at Jackie.bateman@mbht.nhs.uk

After a very busy time getting those orders out for Xmas to our customers across the UK and beyond, we have launched a sale on remaining stock. If you want a great large print, good contrast diary or calendar we still have them in stock. Most items are now HALF PRICE or less.

WHAT ELSE DO WE SELL?

We also sell a range of hand held magnifiers, bumpons, large print playing cards, wide lined notepaper, credit card magnifiers, lamps, lanyards and talking watches. Our large print Sudoku and Crossword books are a perfect gift at any time of year. We will also soon be adding large print calculator and a wider selection of magnifiers

SPRING CHANGES:

With a new season comes change, and one change to VIP Diaries will be that our VIP Diaries' Manager, Laura Garnett will be leaving the team to spend time with her husband and family. Laura has worked extremely hard over the past year to ensure that VIP Diaries products were delivered to customers despite all of the changes and complications caused by Covid-19. I am sure you will join me in wishing Laura well in the future and thanking her for her efforts and dedication to VIP Diaries.

LISTENING TO OUR CUSTOMERS

What would you like to see available in our VIP Diaries' catalogue? Please email me at aileen@sightadvice.org.uk with any suggestions.

A massive thank you to the volunteer support team who work alongside VIP Diaries helping with a wide range of tasks in order to deliver fantastic quality products to our loyal customers. We are actively recruiting new volunteers for our VIP Diaries' team to help with taking orders, contacting customers and packing. If you are interested in joining the team please, contact Julie Halford – Volunteer Support Coordinator.

Best wishes to all from Aileen, Laura and the VIP Diaries' Volunteer Team

Sight Advice South Lakes Team

<p><i>Chief Executive</i> Claire Park</p> <p><i>Services Manager</i> James Carey</p> <p><i>Sight Support Coordinator</i> <i>(Assistive Technology)</i> Tim Ward</p> <p><i>Sight Support Coordinator</i> <i>(Community Development)</i> Judith Rogers</p> <p><i>Sight Support Coordinator</i> <i>(Community Development)</i> Jackie Bateman</p> <p><i>Volunteer Support Officer</i> Julie Halford</p>	<p><i>Young People and Children's</i> <i>Project Coordinator</i> Alicia Makinson</p> <p><i>Sight Support Advisors</i> Sarah Stoddard Krystyna Slosarska</p> <p><i>Eye Clinic Liaison Officers</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>
<p><i>Chair of Trustees</i> Dr Sal Riding</p> <p><i>Trustees</i> Mrs Linda Baverstock Miss Jenny Hodgkinson Mr Paul Blackburn</p>	



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