

BucksVision Summer 2023 Newsletter

Front cover is a photo of a man standing in front of an archery target. The caption reads Hitting the Bullseye! - page 7.

We do hope that you look forward to receiving our newsletter and find the articles interesting. If you have any suggestions for improvements, please do let us know.

If you would like to receive this newsletter in a different format please let us know. Formats include audio (CD or USB), braille or email.

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Opening Hours

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Welcome

Welcome to our Summer newsletter! This edition features the usual smorgasbord of articles, which I hope you will find interesting.

One of the things that I have noticed recently is an increasing number of charities have been promoting the importance of people remembering them in their Wills. In fact, many charities could not operate without these gifts.

We were grateful to recently receive a significant sum from the estate of a local resident, Michael Bennell, [see page 5](#). Michael distributed his estate equally to family members and two charities, one of those being BucksVision.

Gifts in Wills make a real difference to us and enable us to continue to support local blind and partially sighted people during challenging times.

In addition to financial support, BucksVision could not support people without the work of our brilliant volunteers.

We have over 250 volunteers helping us, but we need even more. If you have any friends, family or colleagues who might be interested, please ask them to contact us.

The “unsung heroes” of a charity are its Trustees, who are also volunteers. Being a trustee enables you to make a direct contribution to the way a charity delivers its services.

If you might be interested in becoming a Trustee for BucksVision, please get in touch.

Peter Keen – Our new Patron

We are delighted to announce that we have a new Patron, Peter Keen. Peter is the Chairman of Hypnos, which is based in Princes Risborough. Hypnos has a long and prestigious history, going back over 100 years, of making bespoke beds and mattresses that are some of the best in the world.

BucksVision has not had an active Patron for several years. Steve Naylor, Chief Executive, explained:

“It can be tricky finding an effective Patron. Their role is to help raise the profile of the charity, introducing staff and Trustees to useful personal contacts and business networks. I am absolutely delighted that Peter has chosen to spend some of his very valuable time helping us, it is fantastic news”.

Peter has been a volunteer with BucksVision since 2019, as a volunteer driver for our Hazlemere social club. Peter has seen first-hand the impact that our support has on local people living with sight loss and wishes to support us in any way he can.

“I am so pleased to be invited to become a Patron of BucksVision. I really enjoy my role as a volunteer driver which has allowed me to see the affect BucksVision has on individuals in our community. I am looking forward to helping the fundraising team implement a corporate partnership strategy alongside some other exciting ideas we have for the future”.

Peter will be working closely with Ruth, our Fundraising Manager to help develop our corporate partnership strategy and to help raise our profile across the county.

Remembering Michael

One of the most significant ways that people can support BucksVision is by leaving a gift in their Will.

Recently, we learned that we had been remembered in the Will of Michael Bennell, who sadly died in August of last year, aged 85. Michael lived with his family in Stokenchurch for most of his adult life, before moving to a care home in Marlow.

Michael was fondly remembered by his family, who described him as a devoted son and brother with a strong religious faith. Michael spent his career in banking, moving upwards until he was the bank manager of a branch in Beaconsfield.

Michael was a keen traveller, enjoying travelling across the UK and abroad, including several cruises on the QE2. Michael also enjoyed trips to the theatre, with the musical 'Islands in the Stream' being a firm favourite, and was a keen card player.

Michael chose to leave a part of his estate to BucksVision when he passed away last year, leaving a five-figure sum to the charity. As with many of the donations that we receive, this was completely unexpected and came out of the blue.

As a small charity, Michael's gift will make a real difference. If you are considering leaving a gift in your Will and would like to receive further information, please do not hesitate to contact us on 01296 487 556 or email our Fundraising Manager, Ruth Proudfoot rproudfoot@bucksvision.co.uk

Living Well with Sight Loss

Jan Foster from the RNIB, in partnership with BucksVision, recently hosted an excellent two day 'Living Well with Sight Loss' course, at John Lewis in Milton Keynes.

It was wonderful to have a face-to-face meeting again. Our 22 attendees were able to chat, make new friends, and trade helpful tips.

Topics discussed included the hospital based ECLO service; benefits and registration; Guide Dogs; daily living and mobility; SARC (BISS is the Bucks equivalent) who provide help and support for people with sight and hearing loss in MK; technology; travel concessions; Charles Bonnet Syndrome, whereby people with sight loss can experience visual hallucinations; wellbeing and taking those first small steps to help build confidence; local support and activity groups; setting goals; and all the help RNIB and BucksVision can provide.

"I loved the 2-day course. It was so informative and wonderful to hear everyone's experiences. I learned so much, and met fantastic, strong new friends dealing with extremely difficult situations and disabilities. Thank you." - Michael

If you are interested in attending this course, future dates can be found on [page 9](#) or contact us on 01296 487 556 for more information.

Aiming for a good time

On 3rd July, 13 of our intrepid service users, under the instruction of the Whiteleaf Bowmen, tried their hands at archery. This had been a yearly event before the pandemic so this was our first time shooting since 2019.

Everyone was measured for arrows, fitted with an arm brace and given a chance to feel the bows and targets before the competitive, primaeval spirit set in and the competition began.

The instructors, who gave their time voluntarily, were friendly, patient and helpful and a lot of cheering, fun and laughter could be heard.

Our 2023 'Robin Hood' was Vic Mallows and our 'Maid Marian' was Rosie Beedham.

Sighted volunteers and companions also had a go. It was a very close game but David Coster just managed to take home their prize.

Many thanks to everyone who was brave enough to volunteer to help at an event involving people without sight firing arrows!

Coming Up – Dates for your diary

AUGUST

Bucks County Show

Thursday 31st

Weedon, Aylesbury

We'll be there running a tombola raffle on our stand and would welcome any unwanted gifts etc to use as prizes.

Any donations would need to be dropped off at our office as unfortunately we will not be able to collect them.

Come along and say hello if you attend the Show!

SEPTEMBER

Equipment & Information Days

10am to 2pm

Our popular days where you can talk to various equipment companies and other charities.

Monday 18th - Milton Keynes

Christ the Cornerstone Church

Tuesday 19th - Chesham

Community Room, Chesham Town Hall

Wednesday 20th - Aylesbury

Meadowcroft Community Centre

Friday 22nd - Wycombe

High Wycombe Library

OCTOBER/NOVEMBER

RNIB Living Well with Sight Loss Course

11am to 3pm

High Wycombe Library

Monday October 30th

Monday November 6th

NOVEMBER

RNIB Living Well with Sight Loss Phone Group

11am to 12.30pm

Tuesday 21st

Thursday 23rd

Tuesday 28th

Thursday 30th

The facilitator of the phone group will call you in so you don't need to do anything.

If you are interested in either course, contact us on 01296 487 556 or email reception@bucksvision.co.uk to book a place.

Milton Keynes Tech Hub

The Technology Hub in Milton Keynes, organised by BucksVision volunteer Padma and supported by RNIB, has been such a success that it will now run twice a month.

If you have a technology problem or query you would like help with or would like to find out more about technology and give it a go (we have a range of devices you can try) then get in touch with us on 01296 487 556.

The hub runs on a Friday between 11am and 1pm at MK Central Library and the dates for the rest of the year are listed below:

28 July

11 August

25 August

8 September

29 September

13 October

27 October

10 November

24 November

8 December

Illuminating Possibilities: Join Us

Enriching lives through volunteering

In a world where visual impairment can create barriers, BucksVision stands as a guiding light, offering support, empowerment, and a renewed sense of independence. As a Charity dedicated to enhancing the lives of visually impaired individuals, BucksVision relies on the dedication and commitment of volunteers.

Currently, we are facing a shortage of volunteers, and this presents a critical need for compassionate individuals to join our cause. By becoming a volunteer with BucksVision, you can play a vital role in filling this gap and making a significant impact on the lives of visually impaired individuals. Together, let's address this pressing need and create a stronger, more inclusive community for all.

Discover the Transformative Power of Volunteering

At BucksVision, we understand that visual impairment affects every aspect of a person's life. That's why our charity focuses on providing comprehensive support that encompasses emotional well-being, practical assistance, and community engagement. By volunteering with us, you have the opportunity to directly impact the lives of visually impaired individuals and help them thrive.

We believe in the power of personal connection! We take the time to understand your unique skills, interests, and availability. By tailoring your volunteer experience to align with your passions, we create an environment where you can flourish and make a meaningful contribution. Whether you choose to assist with social activities, provide practical support, or engage in fundraising efforts, your dedication will be valued and celebrated.

Volunteering with BucksVision goes beyond the act of giving back; it is a journey that enriches your own life.

As a volunteer, you will:

Empower Others - By lending your time and support to visually impaired individuals, you will empower them to overcome obstacles and embrace their abilities.

Develop Specialised Skills - Our charity offers comprehensive training programmes that equip you with the knowledge and expertise to support visually impaired individuals effectively.

Make Connections - At BucksVision, we foster a sense of community. As a volunteer, you will have the chance to form meaningful connections with visually impaired individuals and fellow volunteers.

Make a Lasting Impact - Every act of volunteering creates a ripple effect of positive change. By sharing your time and skills, you will contribute to the overall mission of BucksVision, promoting independence, well-being, and social inclusion for visually impaired individuals.

How to Get Involved

Joining BucksVision is a straightforward and rewarding process. [Visit our website bucksvision.co.uk](http://bucksvision.co.uk) and explore the diverse volunteering opportunities available. If you have friends or family members who are interested in volunteering, please do share this with them.

Once you've identified a role that inspires you, complete our online application form. Our dedicated team will review your application and arrange a personal conversation. We want to learn more about your motivations, skills, and availability to ensure we create a volunteering experience tailored to your abilities.

By joining our dedicated team of volunteers, you can make a profound impact on the lives of visually impaired individuals in Buckinghamshire. [Visit our website today](#) and embark on a rewarding journey. **Together, let's make a difference!**

Meet our new Trustees and Our Trustee Board

We are delighted to announce that we have recruited two new Trustees. Read on to learn more about them.

Ian Taylor

Ian joined BucksVision in 2017 as a volunteer Tandem Pilot before getting involved in other activities in the MK area.

Ian responded to an advert for trustees in our Winter 2021 newsletter and was appointed Trustee on 17 October 2022.

Ian has held senior positions within both the public and voluntary sectors within Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes including the Fire Service and St Johns Ambulance.

Jon Sidwell

Jon is our newest trustee. He responded to our advert for new trustees in our last newsletter and was appointed as a Trustee on 19 June.

Jon is recently retired, prior to which he founded and led an IT software company, primarily helping global financial institutions manage their risk.

He is also a volunteer within BucksVision MK Division, where he assists with driving and a range of event support.

Jon is an active volunteer for several other local organisations including Age UK and Parks Trust.

Now you've met our new trustees we'd like to introduce you to the rest of our Board.

Bob Dean, Chair

Bob is retired having spent most of his career with an international IT services company. He undertook a variety of management roles, his most recent being in Business Financial Management. Bob joined the Board in 2012 and became Chair in 2013.

Ian Laing, Vice-Chair

Ian first joined our volunteer team in 2009 to support the office staff, before becoming a Trustee in 2010. Ian's background is in corporate IT services. He was appointed as Vice Chair in 2013.

John Crowther, Treasurer

John is a qualified accountant and came to BucksVision after retiring from Action for Blind People in November 2014, where he was Director of Finance & Resources, then Deputy Chief Executive.

Peter Robbins

Prior to his retirement Peter was a Consultant Workshop Manager. Peter has lived experience of sight loss and has been involved with our services at a local level for many years. He joined the Board in 2009.

Jan Antosiewicz

Jan joined in 2019 shortly before he retired from his position of Social Services Manager, based at Stoke Mandeville Hospital. Jan has in depth knowledge and experience of the sight loss sector both personally and professionally.

We are still looking for new Trustees to join our Board.

If this is of interest to you or you would like to find out more, please get in touch. Our Chief Executive would be delighted to have a chat with you about the role of a Trustee and explain the process of becoming one.

01296 487 556

reception@bucksvision.co.uk

IF I could Go to a Festival

This year the MK International Festival (IF) is taking place from 21-30 July.

Get ready for a feast of live music, circus, comedy, outdoor events, installations and free family activities across Milton Keynes.

The organisers have arranged many accessible events for people with a visual impairment. The Audio Described Guide can be found at ifmiltonkeynes.org/your-visit/access-1.

Here are two events to give you a taster.

Vocal Eyes Descriptive Guided Touch Tour

Friday 21 July at 11.30am

Tour starts: Festival Square (outside Door 18, centre:mk).

Tour ends: Middleton Hall, centre:mk.

An informal tour for blind and visually impaired people aged 12+. It includes a tea break where you can glide through the history and ritual of tea, with a transportive audio and live dance performance.

Gratte Ciel: Place des Anges. Touch Tour & Audio Description **Saturday 29 July**

Touch Tour - 8.45pm

Performance - 9.45pm

A beautiful, astonishing and breath-taking spectacle to enchant audiences of all ages. As night falls across the city, angels begin to appear, high up in the sky. They move through the air, magically suspended above the crowd below. The angels start to glide down into the audience, releasing white feathers which float across the sky. Each angel has their own unique character and style and as their aerial antics become more boisterous, the clouds of feathers thicken, creating a sense of awe and wonder.

Tickets for all Guided Tours are free but must be booked in advance, please contact the Festival box office, 01908 280 800 or email access@stables.org. Early booking is recommended as there are limited spaces.

A Summer of Fun

Our monthly Experience Days are designed to ignite the senses, unlock new dimensions of discovery, and create lasting memories. Join us on an immersive journey as we explore local places of interest, offering unique touch and audio tours. We believe that everyone deserves the opportunity to indulge in life's wonders so we've curated a diverse range of excursions that celebrate the beauty of touch and sound.

So far this summer we have immersed ourselves in gin with a visit to The Oxford Artisan Distillery and taken a journey through time on a steam train at the Bucks Railway Centre; and we have many more adventures planned! We warmly invite you to join our incredible monthly events.

These experiences are not just about discovering new places; they are about building connections, fostering friendships, and creating a supportive community that celebrates diversity.

"Thank you very much for a good trip out yesterday to Bucks railway museum. It was really good, the tour guide was excellent, so interesting and gave perfect descriptions."

My Journey of Discovery

By Mike Pearson

Audio books can be transformational. Book clubs offer opportunities for bringing people together and open up new topics and authors to explore. In these modern times of social media and fake news, it's sometimes a comfort to be grounded in "non-fiction". Audio books take you on a journey of discovery; to a world and place away from everyday life.

Borrow an audio book from your local library, subscribe to a monthly selection of titles, such as Audible, or join the free RNIB and Calibre library service. Either way, it's a journey!

I borrowed an audio book from the local library which chronicled Ernest Shackleton's epic journey to the Antarctic. 'Endurance – Shackleton's Incredible Journey' by Alfred Lansing, narrated by Simon Prebble. It was compelling listening.

Sir Ernest Shackleton participated in four expeditions during the 'Heroic Age' of Antarctic exploration, leading three of them. He was an impressive leader, known for his bravery and ability to build camaraderie in his crews.

In December 1914 Shackleton set sail for the Antarctic aboard the Endurance, by October 1915 his ship had been crushed. The 28 men crew endured five months camped on a drifting ice floe before reaching the uninhabited Elephant Island. From there Shackleton took four men and headed for South Georgia, 800 miles away. It was more than three months before Shackleton was able to rescue the men left on Elephant Island.

In 2019 another group of explorers went looking for the wreck of the Endurance and that's a story I can't wait to read – I've already requested to borrow the audio book from my local Library!

Advert - Calibre Audio Book Groups

Free audiobooks for those with Dyslexia, Autism or Aspergers, Visual Impairment, ADD/ADHD, Other physical and neurological conditions

Bucks Buck Groups

If you find reading print difficult but would love to listen to and discuss books, join Calibre Audio and take part in our free Bucks Book Groups!

In Person Book Group

Last Weds of every month

11am – 12.30pm

Weston Turville

Telephone Book groups also available!

Find out more and sign up

www.calibreaudio.org.uk

01296 432339

Corporate Partnerships

Do you or your friends and family work for a local company? Perhaps they would consider becoming a BucksVision Corporate Partner.

How a corporate partner can help us:

- Organise a one-off fundraising event to fund one of our unique and special social experiences
- Fundraise for a vital piece of equipment
- Offer vital work experience for one of our members with sight loss so they gain the confidence to apply for a permanent job
- Support us at our big events in the summer and at Christmas by staffing, donating prizes and gifts
- Provide an opportunity for us to talk about our work so we can raise our profile in the local area
- Have one of our collection pots in your reception
- Put BucksVision branding on your website and email signatures

In return we can help by providing a:

- Framed certificate to display in your office
- Link to your company on our website
- Photo acknowledgement on social media platforms
- Detailed article in our newsletter including photo and logo which reaches around 1500 local households

We understand that you will want to know how your support helps us so you can inform your colleagues; therefore we offer informative talks and a chance to meet the BucksVision team and have a tour around our resource centre in Aylesbury.

Please contact us to discuss ideas of how we can work together. You will receive help with fundraising ideas, materials and any other information you may need.

rproudfoot@bucksvision.co.uk

01296 487556

Ways to support us

We cannot continue to provide this vital service without the support of our community. There are so many ways to support us:

Make a donation

- Just £10 can help pay for our Resource Centre which offers one to one advice on gadgets and aids to help with everyday tasks sighted people take for granted.
- Just £20 contributes towards our home support which provides a range of services to help within the home, including befriending, reading and shopping.
- Just £50 could help towards our Experience Days. These are outings specifically tailored towards people living with sight loss. We ensure these days are as accessible as possible.

Become a Regular Giver - visit our donation page where you can set up a regular direct debit.

Leave a gift in your Will - See [page 5](#).

Fundraise for us - Organise an event or sponsored activity, encourage friends/family to sponsor you. Ask your company if they can match any funds you raise.

Become a volunteer - [See pages 10 and 11](#).

Sign up for Easyfundraising - Donate through shopping without it costing you a thing!

Buy our annual raffle ticket - Details to follow.

Become a corporate partner - [See previous page](#).

If you would like to discuss any of these further, please contact Ruth Proudfoot on rproudfoot@bucksvision.co.uk or call **01296 329 691**.

'Ed Schoon' – A Poem

By George Edwin Schoon

It's nice of family to share this grub,
Served up by this railway pub,
To celebrate with me in two days' time,
My birthday, when I will be eighty-nine,
My name is George Edwin Schoon, not Edward Schoon,
After my grandad, of the same name,
He was not known for his brevity,
But maybe accounts for my longevity,
Despite failing eyes, seen through haze,
Broken brain leads to untold malaise,
Based on Joan's genealogy - much,
I think the surname's Dutch,
This was confirmed when the checkout lady said
"I should know because I'm Dutch"
Joan had whittled it down to three,
Left it to me, using my knowledge of history.

Useful Contacts

BucksVision – 01296 487 556

Bucks Integrated Sensory Services - 01296 479 970

Sensory Advice Resource Centre - 01908 401 135

RNIB - 0303 123 9999

Macular Society - 0300 3030 111

Glaucoma UK - 01233 648 170

Age UK Buckinghamshire - 01296 431 911

Age UK Milton Keynes - 01908 550 700

Citizens Advice – 0800 144 8848