

Spring 2022

Newsletter

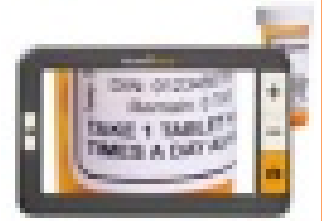


Remembering Rodney - page 10

HumanWare's Explore portable magnifiers

Explore 5 - £425, the perfect 'carry in your pocket' portable magnifier.

From reading TV listings, menus, food packaging and medicine box details, you will find lots of uses for your Explore 5.



Explore 8 - £740

Explore 8 provides superb image for close-up reading and distance viewing.

With an 8" screen and easy to use buttons, magnification and settings can be changed instantly to suit your preferences.



Explore 12 £1395 - The new Two in One portable magnifier for Reading and Writing, includes Writing Stand and Carry Bag

Explore 12 is a new simple to use full HD quality magnifier, excellent for near and distance viewing.



The Explore 12 makes writing so enjoyable, but you can also take it out of the Writing Stand and use it to read wherever you are.



The versatile Explore 12 will allow you to restart your hobbies and enjoy looking at family photographs again.

Explore 12 unlocks the power of reading and writing.

All HumanWare products include a two year guarantee and a 45 day money-back guarantee

Call Freephone 0800 587 2589


or visit www.humanware.com for more information and videos

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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.

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 www.bucksvision.co.uk

Opening Hours
Monday - Friday
9am to 5pm

Follow BucksVision's social media for our latest news



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DAILY LIVING AIDS FOR BLIND AND PARTIALLY SIGHTED PEOPLE



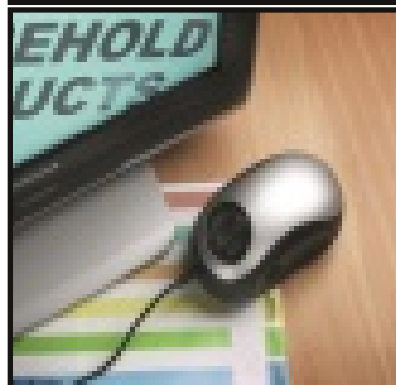
- TALKING CLOCKS AND WATCHES
- TALKING MOBILE PHONES
- MAGNIFIERS
- BRAILLE GAMES
- BIG BUTTON LANDLINE PHONES
- TALKING TAPE MEASURE
- ANTI GLARE GLASSES
- TALKING COLOUR DETECTOR
- TALKING INDUCTION HOBS
- TALKING MICROWAVE
- TALKING COMBINATION OVEN
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COBOLT SYSTEMS LTD The Old Mill House, Mill Road, Reedham, Norwich, Norfolk, NR13 3TL, England.



Welcome

Steve Naylor
Chief Executive

We continue to live in difficult times. As I type this, Russia has continued its aggression towards Ukraine, with condemnation from countries across the globe.

A huge number of people have been affected, with families fleeing to neighbouring countries and relatives anxious about their loved ones. If you have been affected, please get in touch and we will try to help.

Fuel and energy costs are rising to worryingly high levels. You will find information on how to get advice and help with energy costs on pages 8 and 9.

On a more positive note, most of our social and support activities have resumed. We have only been able to resume our services because of the commitment of our

volunteers. I want to pass on my personal thanks and those of all the team here, including our Trustees.

Finally, BucksVision will soon become independent of RNIB. Since 2014, we have been delighted to work in partnership with RNIB to help people with sight loss. Nonetheless, we feel that it is in everyone's best interests for us to become independent so that we can continue to deliver our local services. We are grateful to RNIB for their support over the years, which has included significant levels of funding.

Challenges, and opportunities, lie ahead. We will continue to do our utmost to help local people with sight loss in the most effective way possible and remain grateful for your continued support.



Looking to meet new people?

We were delighted to be able to resume our volunteer led social activities towards the end of last year, our members and volunteers have very much enjoyed attending the clubs again.

At our local groups you can:

- meet others living with sight loss as well as enjoying talks and other entertainment;
- be creative through arts and crafts;
- keep active, we have walking groups and a tandem group in Milton Keynes.

If you would be interested in giving our activities a go or finding out more, please get in touch with the office and we can discuss the different activities in your area.

01296 487 556

reception@bucksvision.co.uk

bucksvision.co.uk/our-services/visual-impairment-social-activities

I enjoy the
creativity of the
craft work we do



Support with Technology

Virtual Technology Group

Once a month we run a Topic Thursday session where we invite speakers to give a demonstration or talk on an aspect of technology.

Our next Topic Thursday will be a general Q&A session on **Thursday 14 April at 2pm**, while our session on **Thursday 12 May at 2pm** will be about voice dictation and how to get the best from it on your computer and devices.

The sessions run on Microsoft Teams and you can join by phone or online.

Beginners Project

If you are new to technology or would like to learn about smart devices accessibility features then consider booking onto our beginners project, delivered by RNIB's Madleen Bluhm.

Running across four weeks, starting on **Friday 10 June** and finishing on **Friday 1 July**, the project will take place in central Milton Keynes.

Telephone/Virtual Support

We have technology volunteers who can provide you with advice and support via telephone or virtually. The majority of our volunteers have sight loss so have personal experience of using technology on a daily basis.

Face to Face Support

In Milton Keynes, we are able to offer face to face appointments. You can book an appointment with a volunteer to help with your query or to explain how something works.

For more information about the above please contact us on **01296 487 556** or **reception@bucksvision.co.uk**



Advice around living costs

Rising energy prices are hitting all households in the UK, with the current political situation impacting matters further. As well as this, the general cost of living is increasing.

The following avenues of support are available to help people concerned about their rising household bills.

Government Help

The Government support package to help with increased energy bills includes three elements:

1. A repayable loan of £200

Every electricity account will receive £200 in credit in October. Those on prepayment meters may receive this £200 credit as a voucher or a cheque.

From April 2023, all households will repay the £200 loan over 5 years. This is an extra £40 a year on your electricity bill.

2. £150 Council Tax rebate

In April, all households in Council Tax bands A to D will receive a single payment of £150.

This is to support the payment of your energy bills and does not need to be repaid.

Set up a Direct Debit for Council Tax if you can, to make sure you get the rebate automatically, otherwise the council will contact you and invite you to make a claim for the rebate.

3. Discretionary Support Fund

From April, local authorities will have funding for energy customers who do not qualify for the £150 Council Tax rebate. Details are not confirmed yet but you could be eligible if you are:

- exempt from paying Council Tax due to benefits
- a student
- resident in a property in Council Tax bands E to H

Help from your Supplier

Your energy supplier may be able to help provide grants so get in touch with them to discuss your energy bills. If your supplier cannot provide a grant you may be able to get one through the **British Gas Energy Trust**, who have criteria you must meet in order to qualify.

Make sure you take your meter readings on 31 March, if you can, this will ensure you pay the lower rate for energy used before 1 April.

Priority Services Register

Sign up for your supplier's Priority Services Register if you or your child is disabled or has a long-term health condition. This means your supplier can offer you extra free services, such as priority support and updates in an emergency.

Advice Lines

If you would like to discuss your needs with someone there are helplines available.

Disability Energy Support

Scope offer free advice to disabled people, helping them to manage their energy and water needs. They offer up to 45 minute telephone appointments with an energy advisor who can provide you with advice specific to your needs. To arrange an appointment apply online, call **0808 801 0828** or email **Disability.EnergySupport@scope.org.uk**.

Bucks Helping Hand

Buckinghamshire Council's Helping Hand advice line offers assistance if you are struggling with food, energy and household bills. Apply online or contact them by phone on **01296 531 151**.

MK Money Lifeline

Offer free confidential money advice to anyone in the Milton Keynes area. Contact them on **0300 1235 198**.

Citizens Advice Bureau

CAB can offer advice about money, their national advice line is **0800 144 8848**.

Remembering Rodney

Some of you may remember us featuring an obituary for BucksVision member Rodney Pengelly in our Spring 2020 newsletter.

Rodney was a talented watercolour artist and horticulturalist who lived in Chalfont St Giles. In 2013, he turned his wonderful paintings into greeting cards and mounted prints to sell with all profits kindly donated to us.

"Since 2008, BucksVision have supplied me with special lighting and magnifiers.

Without this help I would not have been able to paint my highly detailed watercolour paintings, although I still need to have good light and a lot of patience."

Recently we were delighted to be contacted by Rodney's daughter, Julie, who offered us her father's remaining cards. She also let us know that she and her family are hoping to hold an exhibition later this year to display Rodney's work.

We are selling Rodney's wonderful cards and a few mounted prints to help us raise money. All of Rodney's different designs can be found on our website. They include paintings of the local countryside and places of interest.

£3.50 for pack of 10 cards

£10 for mounted prints

**To purchase contact us on:
01296 487 556
reception@bucksvision.co.uk**



OrCam READ in Aylesbury

OrCam READ is a highly sophisticated lightweight smart camera.

Using AI technology, it instantly reads any printed or digital text from books, newspapers, smartphone screens, computers, and more. It is intuitively operated, with just the press of a button. Either listen via the mini speaker on the device or through headphones (wired or Bluetooth).

OrCam READ is the most efficient smartpen on the market, and the only one with Full Page Capture. It is designed for all ages and does not require an internet connection.

With thanks to Optelec, who have kindly loaned us an OrCam READ, we are delighted to announce that we can now demonstrate it at our Resource Centre in Aylesbury. If you would like to have a try of this smart device please get in touch

with us to book an appointment. If you require transport this is something we may be able to arrange.

Additional New Equipment

With thanks to our funders (see page 16) we can now demonstrate the **Optelec Compact 10 HD with speech**. This integrates magnification with text-to-speech technology and provides much flexibility in its use, including being able to use it for crafting or writing.

Additionally from mid-April, we will have the **Explore 12** which you can read more about on page 2 (the Humanware advert).

For more information please contact us on
01296 487 556
reception@bucksvison.co.uk



Gifts to BucksVision

Recently we have gratefully received gifts from people who have sadly passed away.

Jimmy Clark

Jimmy passed away in October 2021 aged 73. He leaves behind two sisters and four brothers. Jimmy had Cerebral Palsy and was visually impaired for most of his life.

To celebrate his life, his family chose to make a donation to BucksVision so we can continue to support people with sight loss.

We would like to thank Jimmy's family for thinking of us at this very sad time.

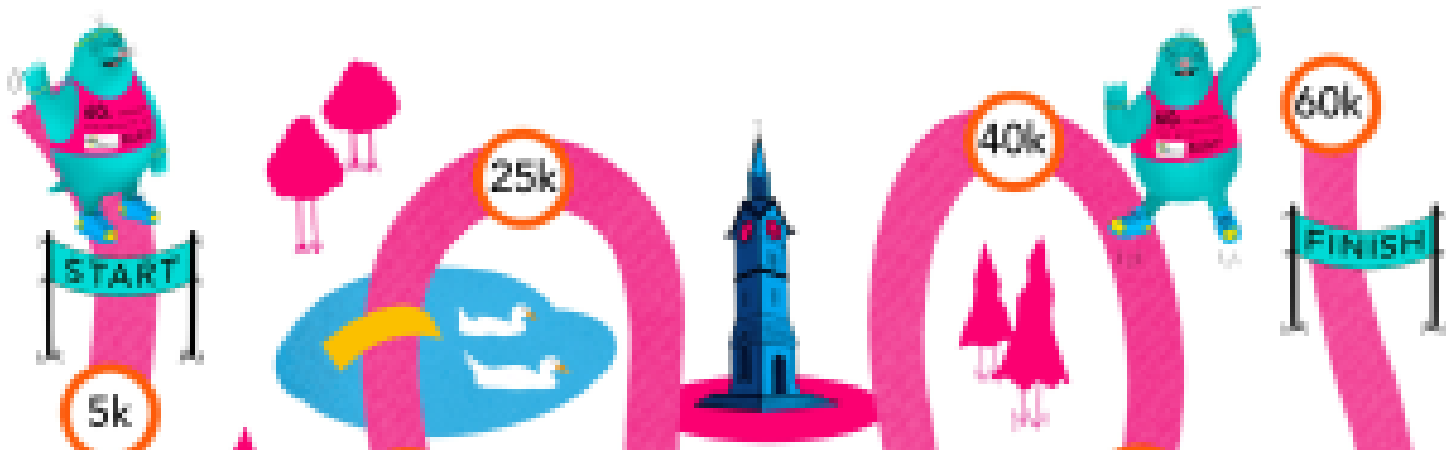
Michael Tilley

Mr Tilley generously chose to support six local charities through a gift in his Will.

We are extremely grateful to receive a substantial legacy from his estate which will help us to continue to deliver our services to people in the local area for the next few years.

If you are interested in leaving a gift to BucksVision in your Will please contact us on **01296 487 556** or email fundraising@bucksvision.co.uk

A copy of our Gifts in Wills leaflet is also available to download from our website.



60k in May!

We are pleased to announce that we are running our virtual fundraising event, **60k Through the Month of May**, again this year!

It can be completed in whatever way works for you. Whether that is walking, running, cycling, swimming or something else.

You might wish to spread the challenge across the whole month by completing 2km a day walking around your garden or, you may wish to try something a bit more ambitious such as completing 20km three times during May. The choice is yours!

You can sign up to our 60k Through the Month of May Challenge via our website.

Alternatively, call us on **01296 487 556** and we will send you a sponsorship pack in the post.

Follow our social media pages (Facebook, Twitter and Instagram) for the latest updates on our activities and don't forget to tag us into your personal posts and use the hashtag **#60kChallenge**.

We hope our 60k Challenge will raise much needed funds as well as awareness of our services.

Physical activity not your thing? There are lots of other ways that you can raise funds for BucksVision.

To find out more visit our website or email fundraising@bucksvision.co.uk



Blind Parents UK's services are completely free and delivered by a dedicated volunteer team, all of whom have a visual impairment themselves.

They never turn down enquiries from family members, friends or professionals and will help in whatever way they can.

If you have an occasional question that needs answering, or want any advice they can give you, they are there to help.

They support first time parents-to-be, through to great grandparents, and their lively community sees a constant flow of questions, information and stories from their active members.

They are very proud of their peer-support model, believing the best people to help are those who have been through similar situations.

Contact Details

Telephone

01905 886 252

They have an answering machine service and aim to return your call within 48 hours, often sooner.

Email

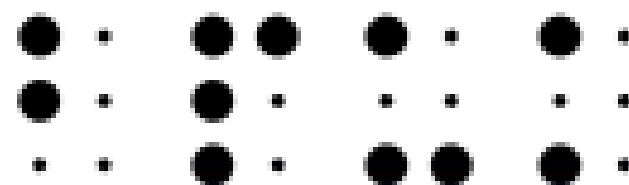
info@blindparents.uk

For all enquiries 24/7

Website

www.blindparents.uk

Here you will find a free, confidential membership form, so they can provide the correct support quickly and efficiently to you.



Blind Parents UK



Macular Society Support Groups

Macular Society's Support Groups offer help in understanding macular disease and coming to terms with sight loss. They share information about obtaining treatment, other services and staying independent.

Aylesbury - Face to Face

The group meets on the last Wednesday of each month (except Dec) from 1pm to 3pm at Aylesbury Methodist Church, Buckingham Street, HP20 2NQ.

They would be delighted to welcome new members to the group. If you would like to join or find out more please contact Christine Hales on **01296 581 771**.

Milton Keynes - Face to Face

The group meets on the second Tuesday of each month from 2pm to 4pm at Centrecom, 602 North Row, Secklow Gate West, MK9 3BJ.

If you would like to join the group please contact Paul Holden on **07769 494 087**.

Amersham & High Wycombe

The High Wycombe group is hoping to return to face to face meetings in May, but in the meantime members of both groups join a regular telephone meeting on the second Tuesday of each month from 2pm to 3pm.

Bucks Telephone Group

From **21 April** the Macular Society will be launching a Buckinghamshire Telephone group. It will meet on the third Thursday of the month from 10.30am to 11.30am.

For more information and details about how to join the telephone groups, please contact Paul Holden on **07769 494 087**.

Thank you to our funders

We depend upon Trusts and Foundations to support our work.

We have gratefully received grants from the following funding bodies.

Thank you.

Ammco Trust
Anson Charitable Trust
Boshier-Hinton Foundation
Garfield Weston Foundation
Hospital Saturday Fund
Masonic Charitable Foundation
Milton Keynes Community Foundation
Persimmon Homes
Sir Jules Thorn Charitable Trust

For Sale

Second hand **Optelec Traveller HD** magnifier.

As new, it comes with its charger and case.

£800 (RRP £1,250)



Useful Contacts

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