

BucksVision Autumn 2021 Newsletter

Front cover has four black and white photos of people in various locations from BucksVision's archives. There is a logo in centre saying 110th Anniversary October 2021. Caption is 110th Anniversary – [pages 5-7](#).

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.

Contents

Welcome	3
BucksVision Services Update.....	4
110 th Anniversary – Get Involved.....	5
110 Years of Our History	6
Meet our Social Media Team.....	8
National Eye Health Week.....	10
Sky Q Voice Guidance	11
Useful Tips and Apps	12
Talking Newspapers App.....	13
Recycling for Good Causes	14
Gifts in Wills Leaflet	14
Order of Mercy Award	15
Useful Contacts	16

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Welcome

Steve Naylor, Chief Executive

Welcome to our Autumn 2021 Newsletter, celebrating 110 years of BucksVision supporting local blind and partially sighted people.

Founded in 1911 as Buckinghamshire Association for the Blind, the charity has seen incredible social and technological changes over the last 110 years.

Nonetheless, there are two principles that have remained constant during this time:

The first is that we have supported people with sight loss by providing social support, useful information and practical advice.

The second is that our work has only been made possible with the help of our dedicated volunteers. Long may that continue and thanks to all of you who support our work in some way.

In the last 110 years, the charity has certainly seen its ups and downs. Who would have predicted that the country would have faced a pandemic in 2020?

The history of the charity serves to remind us that we need to be adaptable and resilient in order to survive and thrive. We need to continue to raise awareness of our work to reach as many people as possible.

In recent years, that has included using social media channels, such as Facebook and Twitter. You can meet our new volunteer social media team on [pages 8 and 9](#). If you would like to join them, please get in touch with us.

I hope that you enjoy this celebratory issue and that you all stay safe and well.

BucksVision Services Update

We are delighted to share the news that some of our activities have resumed. North West took advantage of the good weather and met outside, while our Chalfont, Chiltern, Marlow, MK Lunch Bunch and Wycombe clubs have all restarted.

Both the Aylesbury Rollers Bowls Club and the MK Walking Group have also resumed. Everyone is thrilled to be meeting again.

Our South East and West clubs are planning to return this month and we continue to work on getting our other groups back up and running.

All of our activities have started back with a Covid risk assessment in place and we continue to monitor the situation. We do hope that all of our activities will be back up and running within the next six months.

Below is a picture of the Aylesbury Walking Group on their second walk since resuming. They were blessed with beautiful September sunshine and they all enjoyed catching up with each other.

110th Anniversary – Get Involved

Hopefully you should have received an invitation to join in with our 110th Birthday celebrations. Can you believe we have been supporting people in Buckinghamshire since 1911!

Details about our celebrations this month are below.

Fundraise for us

If you would like to challenge yourself and raise money for us at the same time why not take on a 110 fundraising challenge? You could walk 110 miles, swim 110 laps or knit 110 booties.

Download our Fundraising Pack from our website or contact us to receive a paper copy.

Meet us at your local club

If your local social club is back up and running, we hope to come along and celebrate with you in style, there may even be cake involved! Staff and trustees look forward to meeting you there.

Virtual celebration

As not all of our activities have resumed we are holding a virtual celebration event on Thursday 28 October at 3pm, so we can celebrate with as many people as possible.

We'd love you to join us! You can join by phone or online, contact us if you would like to attend and the details will also be available on our website.

High Sheriff visit

We are delighted to confirm that the High Sheriff of Buckinghamshire, George Anson, will be visiting our office on Thursday 14 October to celebrate our anniversary. We look forward to welcoming him and updating him on our services.

If you have your own celebrations why not share them with us via email, post or social media (using #BV110). We will feature an update in the next edition of the newsletter showing how the celebrations went.

110 Years of Our History

1911 Buckinghamshire Association for the Blind (BAB) is formed consisting of four divisions: North, North West, Mid & South, each paying two Guineas a year to the central funds.

1915 The first soldier blinded during the war returns and work is found for him.

1921 Blind Act makes the "duty of care of the blind" a Council responsibility. Bucks County Council agrees to act through BAB.

1922 Wireless Telegraphy Act gives free wireless licences to blind people. BAB distributes sets on behalf of NIB (National Institute for the Blind).

1937 South East Division formed.

1940 Wartime increased employment opportunities for blind people.

1946 East Division formed.

1947 BAB purchases a house with 10 acres of land for £8,000 in Tylers Green and it becomes the Katherine Knapp Home for the Blind.

1949 County Council employs BAB as agent to provide "comprehensive welfare services" under the National Assistance Act 1948.

1961 To commemorate BAB's Golden Jubilee, a gift of £1 is given to each registered blind person in Bucks.

1965 Annual Margaret Ellen de Fraine arts and crafts competition is held for first time and the De Fraine Shield is presented.

1967 BAB Shop opens in Aylesbury to sell craft goods made by members.

1969 The Katherine Knapp Home is sold to the Council.

1983 West Division formed.

1984 Central Milton Keynes Division formed with an office in MK and new clubs started in Marlow and Chalfonts.

1985 Resource Centre Appeal launched. Target £180,000.

1988 New Resource Centre in Meadowcroft officially opens. First Rehabilitation Officer employed.

1992 Launch of the Hospital Information Service.

1993 Wycombe Chestnuts Blind Bowls Club is founded. The Aylesbury Rollers were founded the previous year.

2009 BAB changes its name to BucksVision.

2014 BucksVision enters into an association with Action for Blind People, later RNIB.

2021 BucksVision announces from 2022 it will become independent from RNIB.

Meet our Social Media Team

Meet our new social media team! Ciara, Kevin, Kirsty, and Tahnee will be sharing their own experiences in our new blog, and creating exciting content across our social media channels.

Kirsty

I am registered blind and am in my thirties. I have been volunteering as a social media volunteer for several years now.

I help by sharing and posting content. I also regularly enjoy taking part in BucksVision's social activities.

I have contributed to newsletter articles over the years and hope to contribute to the blog in the future.

You can read my article on page 11, which is about voice guidance on Sky Q.

Kevin

I joined BucksVision in May 2021. I have been on a planned career break from working in the IT industry for 20+ years in a number of different roles.

I have previously volunteered as a committee member for my daughter's pre-school and as a Food Waste Hero for Olio. I had been looking for opportunities which would allow me to take care of my children and also use and develop my social media and digital marketing skills.

Since I have joined I have helped to create social media campaigns for fundraising and National Eye Health Week. The BucksVision team have been great, very supportive and welcoming. I'm enjoying my time and find it very fulfilling to be part of such an important charity.

Ciara

I am 19 years old and I am registered as severely sight impaired and hearing impaired.

I have just started my second year at Royal Holloway University of London reading philosophy. I am also a keen archer.

All through my school life I did not come across anyone with the same dual impairment as me, and it would have been nice if there was somebody like me on social media that I could identify with. There was not a lot of guidance in the transition from sixth form college to university. Therefore, I would really like to be of support to anyone going through the same stages I went through.

I am thrilled to have written my first blog introducing myself in more detail.

Tahnee

I am a partially sighted woman in my late thirties. I work part-time as a receptionist and part-time as a self-employed independent author, with five books and four short story collections published, a [website](#), [podcast](#), and multiple social media platforms ([Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#)).

I am keen to promote a more positive side of being partially sighted in order to encourage others in a similar situation to not allow their eye condition to hold them back from achieving their dreams.

Therefore, I was excited to get involved with BucksVision's blog. I plan to write blogs about travelling, visiting places of interest and other aspects of my experiences. My first blog marked Youth Mental Health Day.

For our social media channels follow links on [page 2](#).

To read Tahnee's and Ciara's blogs visit our [website blog](#).

National Eye Health Week

National Eye Health Week ran from Monday 20 to Sunday 26 September.

We take part annually to promote the importance of eye health. This year we shared eye care tips across our social media, and had information stands at various libraries in Buckinghamshire.

We were also excited to be invited onto Wycombe Sound radio to talk about eye health and BucksVision.

Below are some key tips to looking after your eye health:

- Have regular eye tests at least every two years (home eye tests are available).
- Keep hydrated, eat well and exercise.
- Protect your eyes from the sun by wearing sunglasses.
- Take regular breaks from your device.
- Wear eye protection for physical work and DIY.
- Stop smoking.

For more eye health tips visit our website or follow us on social media ([see page 2](#)).

Sky Q Voice Guidance

Sky Voice Guidance is a feature only available to Sky Q customers.

It is a speech software setting on your Sky Q box that allows visually impaired people to access the menu on their Sky Q box. Voice Guidance will read out the items on the screen as you navigate them using your remote control.

There are various different features you can access using Voice Guidance:

Check what's on by navigating to the TV guide, this will allow you to hear what's on all channels.

Play your recorded programmes by going to recordings and navigating through them, each recording will be read out.

Set a programme to record by navigating to the programme using your TV guide and pressing the R button on your Sky remote.

Being visually impaired myself and having no sight at all, this is a really great feature for me; using it I have been able to access TV programmes and recordings independently.

By Kirsty Wood

To turn on Voice Guidance you can access it via the accessibility menu or if you have a Sky Q voice remote you can simply say "Voice Guidance on".

For more information about Sky Q Voice Guidance you can visit [sky.com/help/articles/voice-guidance](https://www.sky.com/help/articles/voice-guidance).

Useful Tips and Apps

A Knitting Aid

A member contacted us for some help with counting her knitting.

We found an electronic counter on Amazon. Every time you complete a row you click it and it keeps count of how many you have done with a digital display. The member ordered one and found it really useful.

Sullivan+

Sullivan+ is a free app only available on Android.

It can turn text to speech; recognise faces; describe images; indicate colours; detect light; and has a built in magnifier and PDF reader.

The app has a built in help menu and ability to use voice guidance within the app (if you do not have Talkback turned on normally).

Speech Radio App

British Wireless for the Blind Fund (BWBF) has just launched a ground-breaking new app for Apple and Android.

Speech Radio allows the user to control its functionality and operations entirely by voice.

The free voice-controlled app gives users access to more than 10,000 radio stations. When users don't wish to control all of the features and functions within the app with their voice, they can simply say "speech off". In addition to speech interaction, a built-in gesture mode provides additional means of control when voice is not available.

The app is simple to use; once opened you simply tap, wait for a sound to indicate the device is listening and say the name of the radio station you want to listen to and it will start playing.

Talking Newspapers App

Did you know that you can access local news for free through the Talking News Federation and British Wireless for the Blind's Talking Newspaper app?

The app is available on both Android and Apple devices and is free to download. It is simple to use, just select the region you live in and it will give you a list of available newspapers. In our area there are currently two services available.

Beaconsfield Talking Newspaper

A weekly recording of the local news by a team of volunteers covering Beaconsfield, Gerrards Cross, The Chalfonts, Burnham and Stoke Poges. The service is completely free of charge.

As well as being available on the app you can also receive your news on a USB stick with Beaconsfield Talking Newspaper able to provide a USB player free of charge.

As well as recording the local news, a bi-monthly general interest magazine is also available.

To join up or for more information contact Barbara Francis on 01494 673 327.

Sound News, Milton Keynes

A team of volunteers record an hour of news from the local papers every Thursday evening. The service is completely free of charge and can be accessed both through the app and by receiving a USB stick; they also provide a USB player free of charge.

If you would be interested in receiving Sound News you can call them on 0300 311 9988 or email sound.news@talk21.com

There are also talking newspapers available in both Aylesbury and [Wycombe](#), they both provide a USB service.

Recycling for Good Causes

Have you got unwanted jewellery lying around?

Perhaps you had a clear out during lockdown and don't know what to do with your items. Why not pop them into the enclosed Freepost envelope and send it off! You can declutter your home and support BucksVision at the same time.

Recycling for Good Causes accept jewellery made of any material (e.g. wood, bronze, plastic, gold, silver etc) and will take watches, costume and childrens jewellery, odd earrings, broken chains, etc.

They will also accept old and new UK and foreign banknotes..

Gifts in Wills Leaflet

In the summer newsletter we wrote about the importance of making a Will and ways you can help charities like BucksVision by leaving a gift.

We have now produced a leaflet explaining how to leave a gift in your Will to support BucksVision.

If you would like a copy we can send you a printed version, a text only large print version, or an audio version. We can also email it to you.

01296 487 556

Order of Mercy Award

The League of Mercy was originally founded in 1899 by Royal Charter of Queen Victoria. In 1999 it was re-founded as a UK charity with the purpose of honouring outstanding volunteers.

Charities are annually invited to nominate a volunteer for the award and in March 2020 we asked for nominations from our volunteers and members. One candidate received a significant number of votes, Vanessa Jones, Vice Chair of Milton Keynes Area.

Vanessa has volunteered for BucksVision for 12 years. She originally joined as a Befriender, but like many of our volunteers her role grew. She became a driver, the Treasurer for North Division, an organiser of both social and fundraising activities, and most recently was elected Vice Chair of the MK Area. Vanessa also set up a new group in Milton Keynes called Lunch Bunch and is a volunteer for the MK Reader Service.

We were delighted to learn in July 2021 that Vanessa had been awarded the prestigious Order of Mercy. She was invited to attend an award ceremony in London, but unfortunately was unable to attend. Our Chief Executive Steve Naylor attended and was thrilled to accept the award on her behalf.

Congratulations Vanessa! Thank you for all your time and dedication over the last 12 years. You thoroughly deserve this award.

Useful Contacts

Government Coronavirus Updates

Visit www.gov.uk/coronavirus for latest updates.

NHS Volunteer Responder Scheme - 0808 196 3646

Volunteer support with shopping and hospital transport.

Bucks Integrated Sensory Services - 01296 479 970

Practical support for people with sight loss in Buckinghamshire.

Sensory Advice Resource Centre - 01908 401 135

Practical support for people with sight loss in Milton Keynes.

RNIB - 0303 123 9999

Advice and support with all aspects of sight loss.

Macular Society - 0300 3030 111

Information and support for people with macular conditions.

Glaucoma UK (formerly IGA) - 01233 648 170

Information and advice for people with Glaucoma.

Esme's Umbrella - 020 7391 3299

Support for people experiencing Charles Bonnet Syndrome via RNIB Health Team.

Eye Casualty - 01296 315 939

A telephone triage service for patients concerned about sudden changes in their sight.

Age UK

Support for older people to help them achieve and maintain independence and wellbeing.

Buckinghamshire - 01296 431 911

Milton Keynes - 01908 550 700