

BucksVision Spring 2020 Newsletter

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Welcome

Welcome to our Spring Newsletter, the first of 2020.

It is packed with a wide variety of articles that I hope you will find interesting. If you have any suggestions for topics for articles, please let us know.

One area that we are keen to support people with is technology. Smartphones and tablets are incredible versatile and it is difficult to overstate how they can make a difference to someone with sight loss.

Some people are nervous about using new technology, worrying that they might break something, but let me reassure you that this is not the case. True, the foibles of individual devices can be very frustrating, but it is worth persevering.

If you have any questions about technology or gadgets, please get in touch and we will do our utmost to help. Alternatively, if you feel you could help others we would love to hear from you.

It is also important that our long running services continue to help people. Our wide variety of social activities ensures that people have someone to talk to and can share experiences. People can also share their hobbies by getting involved with our Showcase competition.

All of our services are supported by our amazing volunteers. My sincere thanks to all of you, you really do make a difference.

Photography Competition

Due to the great success of last year's photography competition and calendar, we are launching the competition again for our 2021 Calendar.

The competition will raise awareness of our activities and help us raise funds so we can continue to provide our services to people with sight loss living in Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes.

The title for the BucksVision Photographic Competition is **Beautiful Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes**.

The theme is open to personal interpretation, but we are looking for beautiful photographs that show off Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes in all their glory.

The judges will select twelve photographs that best meet this theme for 2021 BucksVision Calendar.

Competition details:

It is open to everyone and costs £2.50 per photograph to enter. You can centre as many photographs as you like and all twelve winners will receive a prize.

All proceeds raised from the entry costs and the sales of the calendar will come to BucksVision.

The closing date for entries is Monday 1 June 2020

Terms, conditions and entry forms can be requested from the BucksVision office or downloaded from our website:

www.bucksvision.co.uk/photographycompetition

BucksVision Showcase 2020

Come and showcase your skills at our arts and craft competition. Whatever your hobbies, interests or skills we have a class for you! There are twenty to choose from and you can just enter one or all twenty!

Due to the wide variation in people's levels of sight loss we make the competition fair by offering four different sight loss categories.

Each category in each class will be judged and awarded 1st, 2nd and 3rd places. There are also some trophies to win!

Our competition day will be in Aylesbury in July. You and your family and friends are encouraged to come along on the day to meet your competitors and enjoy some activities. However, you don't have to be able to attend to enter the competition, entries can be sent into or dropped off at our office before the day.

Summary of Classes

Musical performance

Cakes and Biscuits

Accessories

Ceramics

Papercraft

Painting/Art

Photography

Crochet and Knitting

Blooms

Hanging Baskets

Groups

For more information or to request a full list of classes please contact us on 01296 487 556 or reception@bucksvision.co.uk

Deadline for entries is Monday 29 June 2020.

Gadgets and technology

Peter Gurney

Talking Televisions

For some years there have been fully accessible talking televisions available from large manufacturers like Panasonic, Sony, Samsung and LG, but this feature normally meant you had to purchase one of their more expensive models.

However LG have now made this feature available on their lower priced models. They have a built-in feature called “Audio Guidance” and when it is turned on everything is spoken to you.

This includes telling you which station you have tuned into; the volume level; navigating the TV guide (including program titles and descriptions); and navigating the settings menus (including retuning your TV).

LG have 3 models: a 24 inch for £169, a 28 inch for £189 and a 32 inch, with a higher specification, for £199.

Other manufacturers:

Samsung with Voice Guide

Voice Guide is available on all series 7, 8 and 9 models and most series 6 models. All functions of the TV should speak, including speech support on some third-party apps including Netflix and YouTube.

Sony Android Televisions

Sony Televisions based on Android TV have a screen reader option which will read out almost all screens and menus including the Sony Electronic Programme Guide.

Panasonic with Voice Guidance

These TVs can announce on-screen information and the most important menus, but the Electronic Program Guide currently doesn't have voice capability.

Echo Connect

This device plugs into your phone socket and then connects wirelessly to the Amazon range of smart speakers allowing you to both make and

receive calls just by talking to your Amazon speaker.

So long as you are within range of the speaker you can just say "answer call" or "Alexa call" followed by either a number or a person's name if they are in your contacts.

It costs £29.99 from Amazon.

Verbalise Radio Controlled Talking Recordable Reminder Clock

This is new on the market and is made by the talking watch shop. It is a disc shaped radio-controlled talking clock with the option to record up to ten reminders.

It speaks the time, day, and date in a choice of male or female voices and can set itself to the correct time using radio transmission. All settings are verbally announced including the ten individual reminders.

You can record a different announcement for each reminder that you have setup. For example it could be setup to tell someone to take their blood pressure tablets at 9am, take their statin at 10pm and so on, or the reminders could be recorded by different people to remind themselves of their individual requirements.

Cost £33.33 from Talking Watch Shop

0345 004 0100

www.talkingwatchshop.co.uk

Technology Information Days

RNIB Table Top Tech Event Wednesday 13 May 2020 - POSTPONED

The RNIB Connect team will be holding this event from 10am to 1.30pm at **High Wycombe Library**.

Connect with regular users of smartphones, audio book players, laptops and everyday tech aids to find out how they make best use of them.

This will be an informal event and a great chance to ask questions and gain information on different devices and services you might not know about. Feel free to bring your favourite piece of tech to share your experience with others.

If you are interested in attending please call or email BucksVision.

BucksVision Day - Wednesday 1 July 2020

Events Space

Milton Keynes Gallery

900 Midsummer Boulevard

Central Milton Keynes

MK9 3QA

10am to 2pm

Come along to our Technology Information Day in Milton Keynes in July.

This event is similar to our “Low Vision” events, but with an emphasis on technology.

The attendees will include technology orientated companies and there will be a chance to get any queries you have about your own devices answered. More information on the day will be sent out nearer the time.

Sight Village 2020

This year we are considering arranging a trip to Sight Village, Birmingham in July.

What is Sight Village?

Sight Village is an exhibition of organisations that provide support to people with sight loss and companies that demonstrate and sell the latest products and technology designed to assist them.

When will it take place?

On Tuesday 14 and Wednesday 15 July at Cranmore Park Conference and Events Centre in Solihull.

Is there a cost?

No, the event is free to visit. However, if BucksVision runs a trip we would ask for a small contribution towards the cost of transport.

What if I need support?

The organisers may be able to provide a guide on the day, although this cannot be guaranteed.

Alternatively, if we organise a trip we may be able to provide volunteer guides on the day.

What exhibitors will be attending?

Amazon Echo, Associated Optical, Dolphin computers, HumanWare, Macular Society, Optelec, Seable Holidays, Talking news Federation, VocalEyes and many more.

Will there be anything else going on?

There will also be workshops taking place on the day.

I'm interested, what next?

Let us know!

Call or email us with your preferred date and if interest is high enough (at least 15 people) we will organise the trip.

Tel. 01296 487 556

email reception@bucksvision.co.uk

The Scruffy the Uffy Journey

Scruffy the Uffy are a range of self-published braille books produced locally in Milton Keynes. Julie-Ann Ward was inspired to write the books to help her son Dexter. Here is her story.

“Over 4 years ago my best friend gave Dexter a doll she called Scruffy the Uffy. Scruffy became one of Dexter’s favourite toys. When he was three months old, we learnt he had Congenital Glaucoma. This is when he had his very first surgery. At 18 months, Dexter started wearing glasses. He hated them so Daddy made a pair for Scruffy which successfully encouraged him to wear them!

At two, Dexter had his 14th surgery and lost all vision in his right eye. He was registered as severally sight impaired and shortly after this he started to use a long cane. So Daddy made Scruffy a long cane.

Dexter met his first visually impaired friend, who was also a cane user, just before his third birthday. Dexter then decided Scruffy needed a friend. So we bought Pink. Scramble followed Pink then Jeff then many more. Dexter's Uffy collection now stands at fourteen.

Scruffy and Dexter have had many adventures together over the last couple of years. Not only has Scruffy been a crutch to help Dexter understand the world around him and how to use the tools he has been given to help him navigate his way in the world; he has also been a comfort to Dexter and has been on many trips with him.

Once we were told Dexter would be a braille user, we started to look for books and games for him. We very quickly realised that the provisions for children were limited. We therefore decided to create our own books using Scruffy as the star.

Dexter is now four and we have just self-published our fifth book.”

Scruffy the Uffy books have giant print, braille and tactile printing in them, and have the characters of Scruffy and friends. The book titles are:

Scruffy and Friends learn letters

Scruffy & Pink learn numbers

Scruffy learns numbers

Scruffy the Uffy and friends – an introduction

Scruffy the Uffy helps Santa

All books are £10 (including P&P) except Scruffy helps Santa which is £15.

They also have a number of Scruffy the Uffy dolls for £9. They can be purchased with or without canes.

The Books and dolls can be ordered through their Facebook page @scruffytheuffybooks or email scruffytheuffy@gmail.com

Add-venture In Learning

Add-venture in Learning organise residential study breaks for sight impaired adults who enjoy learning and socialising with other like-minded people.

A registered charity, they are run by a volunteer committee of both sighted and sight impaired people.

The breaks are held in different parts of the country on a variety of topics which might include music, literature, history or ecology.

Accommodation varies from hotels to student accommodation. A sighted guide accompanies each sight impaired person on talks and visits to places of interest. Guide dogs are welcome.

Participants must make their own way to the venue, but these are usually not far from a railway station. The cost of each break varies according to the type of accommodation and content.

Breaks in 2020

15 – 19 June

Norwich past and present

17 – 21 August

History & archaeology in York

5 – 8 October

Autumn bird migrants at Gibraltar Point, Lincolnshire

If you would like more information about Add-venture in Learning, or to request their newsletter, details are below:

Barbara - 01460 281 226 email mrickitt@hotmail.com

Isobell - 07731 867931

email phillipsisobell@yahoo.ie

www.add-ventureinlearning.org.uk

Macular Society Groups

Working Age and Young People Facebook Group

This group offers advice, information and support to working age people, young people and parents of children with macular disease.

Follow them on Facebook
@MacularSociety

For more information contact Colin Daniels
07494 467 995
colin.daniels@macularsociety.org

Parents Telephone Macular Society Support Group

The support group meet monthly via conference call on the third Thursday of each month from 1.00pm - 2.00pm

The meetings are open to parents & guardians of children with Macular Dystrophies.

For more information contact Colin Daniels
07494 467 995
colin.daniels@macularsociety.org

Volunteering Opportunities

Awareness raising

Be our Ambassador and help us to engage with people in your local community.

By holding Awareness and Information stands in local venues, such as libraries and shopping centres, you can help us raise awareness about the impact of sight loss and how our services can support those living with sight loss.

Social media

We are looking for people who have experience of using Facebook, Twitter and Instagram in a personal or professional capacity. This is an exciting opportunity to work with us to create content and expand our social networks to raise the profile of our charity.

Telephone befriending

Are you friendly, patient and able to build a good rapport with people? This is a wonderful opportunity to engage in a voluntary role without even leaving your house. We are looking for volunteers to offer companionship and alleviate the loneliness blind and partially sighted people can often experience.

Technology support

Technology can make life easier if you have sight problems, but knowing where to start is not always easy, this is where we need your help.

We are looking for volunteers to demonstrate how products, such as tablets and smartphones, are accessible to people with sight loss and to support them to use them.

If you are interested in any of the roles please get in touch with our Volunteer team on 01296 487 556.or email slah@bucksvision.co.uk

Obituaries

Rodney Pengelly

We were very sad to hear of the passing of Rodney Pengelly.

Rodney was a wonderful painter and horticulturist (his garden was full of beautiful roses) and he worked very hard to support BucksVision.

In 2012/3 he used his paintings to create cards and prints to sell with all the proceeds coming to BucksVision.

Through his fantastic work Rodney raised over £3,000 for BucksVision and his local club; a wonderful and much appreciate achievement.

He will be very sadly missed.

Brian Millward

Brian, alongside his wife Olive, was a volunteer for BucksVision for over 40 years.

Brian was an engineer and inventor and initially started as a radio volunteer for British Wireless for the Blind before both him and Olive became involved in BucksVision.

He dedicated his time to helping our members and he will be very sadly missed by all who knew him.

The Safe Place Scheme

The Safe Place Scheme has been in place since 2012 and has built a network of suitable venues, such as local shops and businesses, where someone can go for help and assistance across Buckinghamshire.

What is Safe Place?

The aim of the scheme is to provide reassurance to vulnerable people and their carers, or people who find themselves in challenging situations, so that they can live more independent lifestyles with help available when they are out and about in the community.

How does the scheme work?

Businesses who are part of the scheme will display a safe place sticker. A list of businesses can also be found on Buck County Council's website. This means that a vulnerable person can go in & ask for help.

A vulnerable person may carry a Safe Place contact card that they can show to a business; however you do not have to have a card to seek assistance from those businesses supporting the scheme.

What will businesses be expected to do?

If a vulnerable person seeks help, members of staff would be expected to make a phone call if necessary, provide a temporary safe haven for vulnerable people and also to reassure them and keep them safe until help and support arrives.

BCC Awareness Course

On Wednesday 26 February BucksVision and Buckinghamshire Integrated Sensory Services delivered Visual Awareness training to Bucks County Council staff from the Highways Development Team.

The morning session covered what sight loss means, ways people navigate with sight loss and demonstrating the correct way to sighted guide someone. In the afternoon the participants were paired up and wearing either blindfolds or sim specs were given a route to follow. The route picked out various landmarks which cause problems for people with sight loss when out and about such as the tapering steps in Market Square, pavement advertising boards and uneven paving.

The training ended with the chance for the participants to feedback their experiences and ask questions.

Hopefully the session will help the staff to ensure new developments are as accessible as possible.

Help us reach our Stamp target!

Please help us to reach our current target of 10kg. So far we have 3.7kg so we still have a way to go.

Every little helps and the monies we raise by collecting your stamps, will enable us to continue to run our services.

Why should I do with my stamps?

Drop them off at our office in Aylesbury

Request a freepost envelope to send them to us

If you have collected a significant amount you can call us to see if we can collect them.

Bestsellers 2019

1. VIP A3 Calendar
2. Partially Sighted Badge (as advertised in our Winter newsletter)
3. VIP A6 Diary
4. Envelope Guides
5. Keyring Alarm clock
6. Anti-glare Glasses

For Sale

Prodigi Connect 12

Second hand but in good shape

Offers in region of £1,500

Optelec Clearview Spectrum Desktop magnifier

Several years old

Free to a good home

Collection from Winslow

Computer with large print keyboard and dell speakers Available for collection from Winslow

Useful Contacts

Bucks Integrated Sensory Service – 01296 479970

(For support dealing with sight loss at home in Buckinghamshire)

Sensory Advice Resource Centre – 01908 401135

(For support dealing with sight loss at home in Milton Keynes)

RNIB – 0303 123 9999

Advice and support with all aspects of sight loss.

Macular Society – 0300 3030 111 (Helpline)

Information and support for people with macular conditions

Age UK Bucks – 01296 431911

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

Age UK Milton Keynes – 01908 550700

Support for older people living in Milton Keynes to help them achieve and maintain independence and wellbeing.

MK Reader Service – 01908 231123

Support with reading and shopping in Milton Keynes.

British Wireless for the Blind – 01622 754757

Radio sets on free loan for people who meet the criteria.

Esme's Umbrella – 020 7391 3299

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

BucksVision – 01296 487 556

143 Meadowcroft, Aylesbury HP19 9HH

www.bucksvision.co.uk