



**Devon in Sight**  
Your local sight loss charity



# Newsletter

Summer 2019 - Issue 20



**Tactile Art Sessions with the Thelma Hulbert Galley add a splash of colour!**

# Chief Executive's Update

Welcome to the Summer Edition of the Devon in Sight Newsletter.



When I joined Devon in Sight in 2013 I was surprised to learn how much support was available for people who are blind or partially sighted (and their families) from Health and Social Care, the Voluntary Sector and other community groups.

Navigating the Adult Eye Health and Sight Loss Pathway is complex. Many patients are not aware of the support services available to them. It took me months to get a basic understanding. If it took me months to understand what was available what hope was there for people who are blind or partially sighted?

I am delighted to see that our Award Winning Needs Assessment - **The Sight Loss MOT** - continues to help people navigate the support that is available to them.

Our **Community Support Service** has attracted huge interest in the sight loss sector nationally and our **Sight Loss MOT** is now being piloted in more areas around the country.

We are delighted to have been approached to talk about our services again at **The National Visionary Conference in Birmingham** later in the year. This is tremendous news and to get the support of our peers nationally is very humbling.

One of my duties as Chief Executive is to ensure that Devon in Sight innovates and moves with the times. This edition of the newsletter is the first to be made available on Audio USB data stick. This is the format now used by most Talking Books and Taking Newspapers. This transition has been made possible by the kind support of the charity See the Future who have helped us purchase the copying equipment and USB sticks.

In these pages you will see the amazing activities and life changing work that is undertaken by our front line staff. Our new Sight Loss Adviser Richard Bowman has started his 'Grand Tour' of the Community Sight Loss Hubs to share his extensive knowledge particularly around Assistive Technology.

We recently sent a briefing pack to all Devon's GP Practices, High Street Opticians, Eye Clinic Liaison Officers (ECLOs) in the hospital eye units and Rehabilitation Officers in the Local Authority Sensory Teams to keep them informed of our services. **We have started receiving more referrals as a result.**

We were hoping to launch our **BIG Walk for Sight** in this edition of the newsletter but scheduling issues at the venue meant that we will have to do the event next year. This will be a major event and we would rather do it well and with the full support of the venue than not at all. We hope to have more news next issue.

Our reputation continues to grow. There are some exciting developments that are taking place with corporate support which I cannot share at this time but are progressing nicely.

Finally, I am delighted to announce that our newest Community Sight Loss Hub is opening in Newton Abbot this August and this will be closely followed by a Hub in Teignmouth in September.

Onwards and upwards!

*Grahame*

**Grahame Flynn**

Chief Executive Officer

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▲ Our partners

## Visual Impairment Road shows

We would like to thank all of you who responded to our invitation to attend our Visual Impairment Road shows held during the first week of July in Plymouth, Torquay and Exeter.

Devon in Sight worked in partnership with Enhanced Vision, Optelec, Freedom Scientific and Schweizer to bring you the latest products and technologies for blind and partially sighted people.

The events were a huge success and we hope to bring you more events like this in the future.



▲ The Passmore Edwards Centre in Newton Abbot

## New 'Talk and Support Groups' to Launch!

We are delighted to announce that our latest Community Sight Loss Hubs will be launching at The Passmore Edwards Centre in Newton Abbot in August and at the Cliffden Hotel in Teignmouth in September.

Our latest Talk and Support Groups will be launched by Cathy Duffy and Grahame Flynn on **Thursday 15th August 2019** and **Tuesday 3rd September 2019**. This is in direct response to requests from people with sight loss who live in the areas and other sight loss organisations.

The Newton Abbot and Teignmouth Talk and Support Groups will meet monthly. **For more details please see the Community Support Service Pages.**

## Teignmouth Hub Launch

Breaking News!!!



▲ The Cliffden Hotel in Teignmouth

**In April 2018 it was announced that Starboard Hotels had taken over the 47-room Cliffden Hotel in Teignmouth from the charity Guide Dogs. Rumours quickly spread that the new owners were not keen to have people who were blind or partially sighted as guests. Devon in Sight's Chief Executive Officer Grahame Flynn turned investigative journalist to get to the bottom of the rumours.**

The Cliffden is a magnificent property, built as a family home in around 1815. It has a rich history and fascinating heritage, all enhanced by its enviable proximity to the sea and of course its beautifully manicured gardens. In 1988, the house was purchased by Guide Dogs for the Blind and turned into a Vision Hotel that specialised in breaks for people who were blind or

**“The Cliffden continues to specialise in offering holidays to visually impaired people.”**

partially sighted. In 2017 Guide Dogs announced their intention to sell the three Vision Hotels due to the spiralling cost of running and maintaining the three properties.

As a Teignmouth resident and in my capacity as Chief Executive of Devon in Sight I needed to get to the bottom of the negative rumours.

Margaret Garcia of Starboard Hotels was very welcoming. She said, “I am so grateful to be given the opportunity to clarify the situation. We are pleased to be investing in this historic hotel and we have started to sympathetically restore the property and the great facilities that already exist for people with sight loss and their families, as well as other guests. The Cliffden continues to specialise in offering holidays to visually impaired people but is equally suited to offering a scenic retreat to any guests seeking a little rest and relaxation by the seaside. We provide our guests with all the ingredients necessary to ensure that they enjoy a comfortable stay, and a positive dining experience, with us.”

Touring the hotel it soon became clear that new life is being breathed into the hotel and we are delighted to announce that it will shortly host our new Teignmouth Talk and Support Group. These are not the actions of a hotel group that doesn't care about its blind or partially sighted clientèle!

**If you live in Teignbridge and would like to attend our Teignmouth Talk and Support Group please give us a ring so we can invite you to the launch. For more information about Starboard Hotels please visit: [www.starboardhotels.com](http://www.starboardhotels.com)**

# Sight Village 2019 Review



▲ Cathy Duffy & Richard Bowman on the Devon in Sight stand

**Sight Village is the UK's leading exhibition for blind and partially sighted people and offers an opportunity to see leading products and services under one roof.**

The second Sight Village South West Event took place on Wednesday 24th April 2019 at The Sandy Park Conference Centre, in Exeter better known as the home of The Exeter Chiefs Rugby Squad.

It is organised by The Queen Alexandra College, the national college for people with disabilities.

This is the second year that the team from Devon in Sight joined numerous exhibitors at this significant event.

The exhibition provides an opportunity for people who are blind or partially sighted and their families to find out more about what support is available to them locally and nationally and to try out the latest products and technology designed to assist people who are blind and visually impaired.

Richard Bowman our new Sight Loss Adviser said, "This was my first Sight Village and I found it a fantastic experience. I really enjoyed meeting clients whom I had only spoken to on the telephone. It was a great opportunity to meet up with a number of suppliers of Low Vision Aids and Daily Living Equipment too."

Events like this are not only a great opportunity to talk about our services to blind and partially sighted people but to also meet up with our colleagues from the sight loss sector. So much of the great work that we do is undertaken through formal and informal partnership working. We are always looking for new equipment and services for our clients.

This was the first major event where we were able to use our newly designed marketing literature. It received a very warm reception.

If Sight Village South West returns in 2020 it is well worth a visit.

**For more information about The Queen Alexandra College please visit: [www.qac.ac.uk](http://www.qac.ac.uk)**

# New Audio Format for Newsletter



▲ Leanne Greengrass (See the Future) & Grahame Flynn

For many years Devon in Sight has produced its newsletter in traditional large print, digital download and Audio CD formats.

When our CD copying machine started developing faults we were forced to review our audio format options. It soon became clear that we needed to move with the times and transition from the old CD format to USB Memory Sticks. We shared this news with our regular listeners last edition.

Many Talking Newspapers and Talking Book suppliers have moved over to a USB Memory Stick format. It makes sense for us to use the same format for our newsletter.

There are many advantages to moving over to a USB Memory Stick Player. They are very easy to use with a traditional On/Off/volume control. There is automatic bookmarking, a built-in rechargeable battery or mains supply and excellent sound quality. USB players are relatively cheap to purchase and very portable.

USB players are available for between £40 and £50 dependent on the model. We suggest purchasing them directly from one of the main suppliers - King Access Technology LTD. **Their Order Hotline is 01935 411 322.** Orders taken over the telephone can be sent out FREE using Articles for the Blind.

Depending on your circumstances you may be eligible to be able to get a USB player FREE through **British Wireless for the Blind** on **01622 754 757** or your local Talking Newspaper.

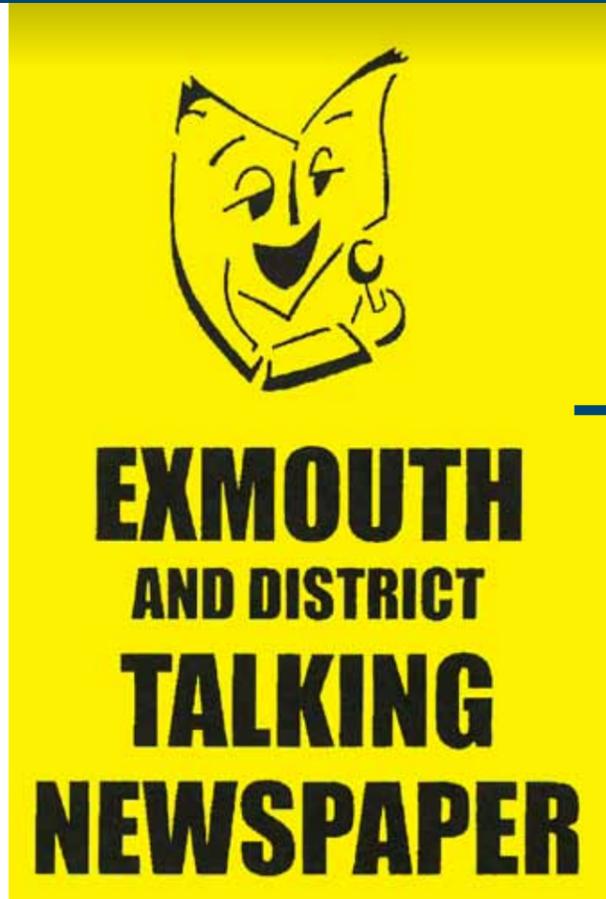
The transition from Compact Disc (CD) to USB Data Sticks was made possible by the ongoing support of the Devon based charity **See the Future**.

We would like to extend our sincere thanks to Leanne Greengrass of **See the Future** for her generous donation of £1950.00 that has allowed us to purchase 200 USB sticks and a new USB copying machine.

**For more information about See the Future please visit their website at [www.seethefuture.co.uk](http://www.seethefuture.co.uk)**

**If you would like to receive the newsletter in USB Data Stick format in future or need help sourcing a player please give us a call on the main telephone number.**

# Exmouth Talking Newspaper



For many years the audio master of our Newsletter has been produced by the team at Exmouth & District Talking Newspaper.

We have always received lovely feedback regarding the quality of the readers for the audio newsletter so we would like to take this opportunity to say thank you. The team have also been very supportive in helping us transition from the old CD format to USB Data Stick.

Exmouth & District Talking Newspapers hosted the South West Talking Newspaper Regional Conference in June where over 60 delegates representing TN in the region attended. We were delighted to be asked by Exmouth & District TN to exhibit at this event.

In East Devon we are fortunate to have Exmouth & District TN and Sid Vale & Eastern District TN. Both are charities and rely on volunteers to record the news and items of interest in local newspapers.

For further information about Exmouth TN contact Gillian Laws on 01395 266968 and for Sid Vale contact Wendy Eagles on 07552766382.

# BIG Sale for Sight!



## Grab yourself a bargain!!!

We will be holding a 'Make a Donation Sale' of discontinued, ex-demonstration and donated equipment at Splatford Barton on **Wednesday 18th September 2019** between 10am and 3pm.

**Items include:** task lamps, optical and digital magnifiers, alarm clocks, wall clocks, watches, communiclocks, talking calculators, colour recognition devices, large print books and playing cards, symbol canes, computer keyboards and lots more besides.

All items are being made available for suggested donations only and will **not be supported by a guarantee.**

All electrical items have been Portable Appliance Tested for safety.

**Please ring in advance to book yourself an appointment to look through the equipment with one of the Advisers.**

**Tel: 01392 876 666**

Feature

## Volunteer Profile

We need  
people like  
you!!!

**Mike King has been volunteering for Devon in Sight since 2012.**

Mike spent most of his working life working for the Government in computing. He was Head of Computing at the Science Research Council in Swindon.

Since moving to Devon Mike has volunteered for the Home Library Service run by the Royal Voluntary Services.

Mike says, "My partner Elizabeth Twining has been Devon in Sight's Membership Secretary for many years. I am usually dragged into the office to help with the mail out of the large print newsletters and preparing the Audio Newsletter on CD. Now that the copying machine is on its last legs I am pleased to see that the charity is embracing newer technology and moving over to USB Data sticks."

Grahame Flynn said, "Mike is a highly valued member of our Head Office Team. We are always pleased to hear from people who have something to offer the charity"

**If you are interested in Volunteering please give us a call or visit the Supporting Us area of the website at [www.devoninsight.co.uk](http://www.devoninsight.co.uk)**



Feature

## Volunteering at Devon in Sight

### Could you help us to support more people with Sight Loss?

**Volunteering can be a rewarding way to help in your local community at the same time as meeting new friends, developing skills and exploring hobbies. Even if you only have a few hours to spare the impact of your time is immense.**

In the coming months we will be hosting some large fundraising events and we are appealing for your help.

We are keen to hear from anyone who would like to support the charity by joining our Fundraising Team or who would like to organise their own fundraising event.

We have developed **The Ultimate Guide to Fundraising** to help guide you.

**For an informal chat about volunteering opportunities at Devon in Sight please ring 01392 876 666**

## Sharing our Sight Loss MOT



▲ Devon in Sight Team at Wiltshire Sight

**Devon in Sight were pleased to support the team at Wiltshire Sight at a recent event to re-launch their services for people with sight loss across Wiltshire.**

The event, which took place at their centre in Devizes, was attended by about 50 people from health, social care and the voluntary sector with representatives from Public Health, Wiltshire Council, the Fire Service, the Local Authority Sensory Team and Macular Society among others. As a core part of their new community-based service, Wiltshire Sight will be using the Award Winning Sight Loss MOT assessment tool which has been developed by Devon in Sight.

Julian Garner the Business Development Manager for Devon in Sight gave a presentation on the evidence base behind the Sight Loss MOT. He said, “The eight steps in the Sight Loss MOT are based on national research and best practice, and provide a comprehensive review of the issues people may be experiencing because of their sight loss. This will

“...many people tell us that it is the first time they have really been able to talk about the traumatic impact that sight loss has had on their lives!”

form the basis of an action plan for the individual, staff from Wiltshire Sight, or one of the many referral partners with the aim of improving people’s independence and wellbeing.”

Devon in Sight has had really positive results from using the Sight Loss MOT with people in Devon and Torbay, with some remarkable stories of people being supported to achieve real change and improvements in their lives, despite the many practical and emotional challenges they face.

Cathy Duffy the Senior Community Support Worker for Devon in Sight said, “An important part of the Sight Loss MOT process is taking time to listen to people’s experiences of living with sight loss, and many people tell us that it is the first time they have really been able to talk about the traumatic impact that sight loss has had on their lives. These conversations are often the start of a journey to making really positive steps forward.”

Grahame Flynn, Devon in Sight’s Chief Executive Officer said, “It is one of our strategic priorities that we will contribute to the development of policy and best practice at a local, regional and national level through effective partnerships with other sight loss charities, healthcare providers and commissioners”.

Devon in Sight will continue to work with Wiltshire Sight as they roll out the Sight Loss MOT, along with a number of other sight loss charities across the UK who are now using it within their services. Whilst our priority is local service delivery it is very gratifying that we can achieve wider impact by sharing our learning with others.”

**If you would like to find out more about the Sight Loss MOT contact Julian Garner on [julian@devoninsight.org.uk](mailto:julian@devoninsight.org.uk)**

# Community Fundraising News

We are delighted to receive support from our local communities for our work



▲ (Left to right) Debbie Beechey of the Two Mile Oak Inn, Jill and Chris Tester flanked by Grahame Flynn and Cathy Duffy.

## They're the Tops!

**The Wednesday Tea Dancers meet at Burlescombe & Westleigh Community Hall, Tiverton.**

Devon in Sight's Marg Vickers was delighted to receive another donation of £500 from organisers Toby and Margaret Moggridge. We would like to thank the Tea Dancers for their ongoing support.



▲ Cheque presentation

## Honiton Lions a roaring success!!

The Honiton & District Lions Club have made a hugely generous donation of £557.00.

This has helped us to purchase a selection of Assistive Technology solutions for demonstration purposes. These include an iPad, and Amazon Dot and Echo.

For more information please visit: [www.honitonlions.org.uk](http://www.honitonlions.org.uk)



## The Two Mile Oak does it again!

Another successful year's fundraising at the Two Mile Oak Inn near Abbotskerswell has seen Devon in Sight receive a £1,165 donation.

Debbie Beechey, Landlady of the Two Mile Oak said, "Devon in Sight is close to everyone at Two Mile Oak since the charity supports Chris Tester, a former Two Mile Oak Supervisor who was shot and blinded during a robbery in Antigua on Christmas Day 2016".

Grahame Flynn said, "We would like to extend our warmest thanks to the staff and customers of the Two Mile Oak for their ongoing support."

An update from  
**Fundraising**

Help us to  
support  
more  
people!

## New Corporate Supporter Announced!

The team at Devon in Sight do not give medical, financial or legal advice. Advice in these areas is obviously tightly regulated and a professional service.

We know that many of our clients have put off making a Will, or thought about issues like Lasting Powers of Attorney, probate or tax issues. We wanted to find ways of getting this kind of help from a trusted source.

We are delighted to announce that **Kitsons Solicitors** have just become our newest Corporate Supporter and we are looking at how they can support the charity and our clients.

Charlie Siegle of Kitsons said, “Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is core to all aspects of Kitsons Solicitors operations, from the way we conduct our business to the ways in which we contribute to the Devon community. We are delighted to be working with and supporting Devon in Sight. You are a superb local charity who provide vital support and advice for people across Devon”.

We will share more information in our next newsletter.



“You are a superb local charity who provide vital support and advice for people across Devon”.



▲ ‘Jump for Sight’ in 2018

## Could you take the plunge for us?

**Skydive Buzz is one of the UK’s leading parachute schools based at Dunkeswell Airfield, Honiton and they are now Corporate Supporters of Devon in Sight.**

“My tandem Skydive was one of the most exhilarating experiences of my life!” recalls Devon in Sight’s CEO Grahame Flynn, “The exhilarating Freefall combined with the peace and tranquillity of the parachute ride makes Tandem Skydiving a unique experience you will never forget.”

If you, your family or friends want to sign up for one of our jump dates on Sunday 22nd September 2019 or Saturday 9th May 2020 give us a call to learn more.

## 500 Friends of Devon in Sight



### Why I became a Friend of Devon in Sight!

In the last Newsletter we launched our **500 Friends of Devon in Sight Campaign**. We are delighted to report that a growing number of you have decided to support the charity with a regular monthly donation. Mary Smith from Honiton was one of the first to join the scheme.

Mary explains, “When I heard about the 500 Friends Appeal I simply had to do something. I was very conscious of the fact that I have been receiving services from Devon in Sight for a number of years and yet I wasn’t making any contribution to towards it. I am very grateful for the Talk and

“When I heard about the 500 Friends of Devon in Sight Appeal I simply had to do something!”

Support Group meetings in Honiton. I gain a lot of knowledge from the varied speakers and enjoy the interaction with other clients where we exchange experiences and talk about what has helped us overcome obstacles. It also gives me a break from my usual routine and amazes me that we don’t have to pay for this very valuable service.

I am very happy to contribute by regular giving as a Friend of Devon in Sight.”

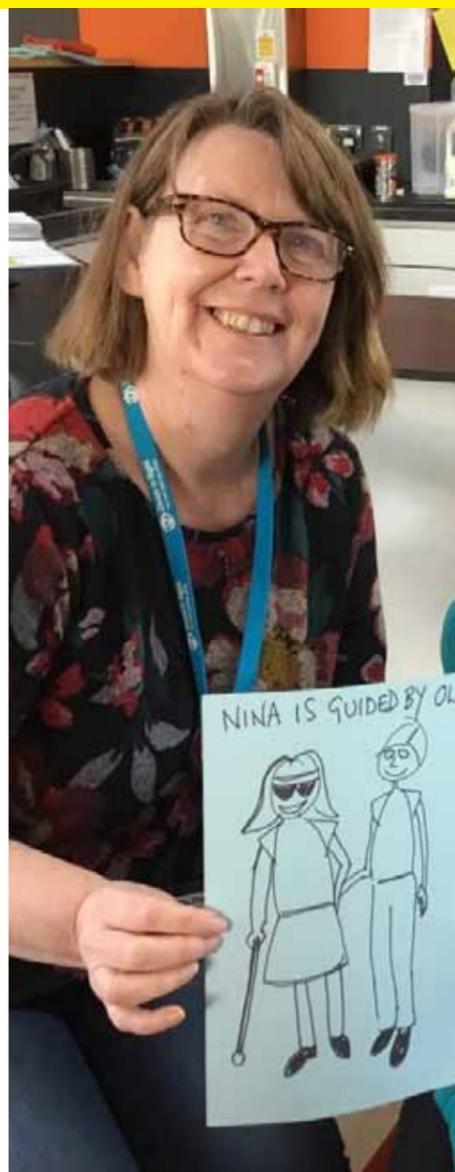
We have set ourselves a target of signing up 500 regular donors by our Centenary in 2025. Your donations help more people who are blind or partially sighted to receive the support they need to live happy and healthy lives.

Everyone who joins our ‘**500 Friends of Devon in Sight Campaign**’ will receive a limited edition ‘**I’m a Friend of Devon in Sight**’ Enamel Badge.



You can set up a regular donation by visiting our website at [www.devoninsight.org.uk](http://www.devoninsight.org.uk) or give us a call on 01392 876 666

## South Devon & Torbay



**Our Community Support Service in South Devon & Torbay is run by Cathy Duffy our Senior Community Support Worker.**

When we designed our Community Support Service we were keen to adopt some key national strategies.

The **England Vision Strategy** has six national priorities. **Priority Six** indicates the importance of developing peer support and self help groups in every community for adults, children and families to provide voluntary sector support for independent living.

Over the coming pages you will be able to hear how the Community Support Service continues to develop and evolve addressing this key priority.

In our Talk and Support Groups members are identifying sessions that they enjoyed so much they requested for these to be expanded. Examples would include regular wellbeing sessions and tactile art.

**Cathy can be contacted through our Head Office in Kennford on:**

**01392 876 666**

## Serving Newton Abbot, Dawlish, Hele, Teignmouth, Torquay, Totnes and surrounding districts.

Wellbeing is of course a hot topic for us all, but it will mean different things to different people. Wellbeing is defined by the Oxford English Dictionary as 'the state of being comfortable, healthy, or happy.'

However, it is important to realise that wellbeing is a much broader concept than moment-to-moment happiness. While it does include happiness, it also includes other things, such as how satisfied people are with their life as a whole, their sense of purpose, and how in control they feel (New Economics Foundation (2012) *Measuring Wellbeing: A guide for practitioners*, London: New Economics Foundation)

Wellbeing is a theme that runs through our Sight Loss MOT assessment and is shaped to identify where there may be a need for information, advice or support.



## Lifeworks Kool Club



▲ Cathy Duffy at the Kool for Kids Club Totnes

**The Kool Club in Totnes is an innovative and inclusive Youth Club for young people with learning disabilities which meets on Saturdays throughout the year.**

The Club offers a relaxed and supportive environment for young people to make friends and develop skills through a variety of activities, in a dedicated youth space and out in the community.

When they needed to work with a local organisation to raise awareness of what they do and how they support people in the community...Devon in Sight was a natural choice!

Devon in Sight's Senior Support Worker Cathy Duffy said, "I had a two great sessions with the members of Kool Club. As well as talking about how sight loss affects people's lives, we also tried out lots of different types of Daily Living Aids and equipment and used sight loss simulator specs along with some role play.

## "Making the community better for people with sight loss"

Robyn (Kool Club member) said, "There were so many different things available to help people who cannot see. I liked the talking watch and clock."

Kool Club member Harry said, "We want to let people know about the ways Devon in Sight help people. We should make some posters to show everyone." So posters it was!

The group set about designing their posters. There were lots of ideas flying around as to what to include on them - guide dogs were a popular choice as well as clocks, watches and many other gadgets.

Kool Club member Jessy said, "This has been a real fun thing to do. My poster had a guide dog on it. Cathy was able to tell me all about how the different gadgets worked. I liked the one that stopped you putting too much water and milk in a cup."

Kool Club member Oscar said, "I am so glad that Cathy came to talk to us. I have learnt lots of new things today. At the end of the session we put all our posters up on the walls and we are going to leave them there to raise awareness for people with sight loss. Today gets 10/10 from me!"

Cathy concluded, "I really enjoyed getting stuck in with the group making posters and the results were amazing. Well done and thank you to everyone at Kool Club!"

**For more information about the Kool Club please visit: <https://lifeworks-uk.org/our-services/community-projects/kool-club/>**

## East Devon



**Our Community Support Service in East Devon is run by Tracey Agutter.**

**When you receive this copy of your newsletter you may be one of over a hundred people in East Devon who have had a Sight Loss MOT.**

The word is spreading in East Devon there has currently been an explosion of enquiries from people who would like to have a MOT. While this is fantastic news that more people want this service the downside is that there is now a waiting list for appointments. Please bear with me as we have many ways in which we can help and you can always come along to one of the four Talk and Support Groups in East Devon where support and advice is available or you can visit Richard Bowman our Sight Loss Adviser at our Splatford office.

It always feels such a privilege to hear about an individual's sight loss story and even more if I can offer some support or information to make

**Tracey can be contacted through our Head Office in Kennford on:**

**01392 876 666**

## Serving Axminster, Budleigh, Exmouth Honiton, Sidmouth and surrounding districts.

life that little bit easier. At a recent appointment I met a client who had two weeks earlier been told she had AMD and that she would lose her sight. This client was naturally distraught and had assumed that she would go completely blind. We were able to discuss how AMD affects central vision and at the end of the visit she was feeling better.

We have been very fortunate to be working with the **Thelma Hulbert Gallery** to have been able to host four **Tactile Art Sessions** at Twyford House in Sidmouth. These sessions have been full of fun and enjoyed by all.

“It is such good therapy,” commented one client.

The good news is we have been fortunate to have been awarded funding for some future sessions. We are currently working with the Thelma Hulbert Gallery and the dates will be available shortly.

**If you would like to register an interest in attending the sessions please call Tracey Agutter on 07718 651 629.**



▲ Tina Chadwick

East Devon continued...

## Anne's Story

**Despite her sight loss Anne Keynes has continued with her passion for horse riding.**

**My first pony was a 13.2 hands high New Cross Welsh called Achilles which I shared with my sister.**

When I was fifteen I got a 15.2 hands high Thoroughbred Mare called Lady Patricia. My sister and I entered pony club, local shows, gymkhanas and competed in cross country.

We moved to Devon in November 1994 to our 50 acre farm, rearing beef suckler cows. We brought two horses with us. Ray my husband used to ride, Foxy a 16.1 hands high home bred out of my Thoroughbred Mare, Filly.

I gradually lost my eyesight, due to Retinitis Pigmentosa but I continued to ride, but I was no longer able to jump.

In the riding school I count the strides between markers to get to the correct position and use the fluorescence on the letters to try and help me see across the school.

I have had my current horse Deli a 15.2 hands high Grey Anglo Arab gelding for seven years and started doing unaffiliated dressage at Centyfield Eventing & Dressage Academy, Tedburn St Mary & Sid and Otter Valley Riding Club.



## National PVI (Partial Visual Impairment) Canter Champion

Last year we joined Chard & District Riding for the Disabled Association where I have been training with Karen Court. At the South West Regional finals at Lakefield Camelford Cornwall we qualified for National Championships at Hartbury.

Deli is now 20yrs old. We have 13.2 hands high companion pony called Scarlet a Bay Mare that is 27 years old. Ray leads her out with me & Deli on the lane, then I can go on my own or canter round the outside of our hay field.

Deli is not very brave so will stop if something is in the way such as a fallen branch. Recently, we were cantering round our field. Deli came to a stop as someone had pitched a tent at the far end of our field. I didn't see it as it was green! That was a near miss I will never forget!

**I took part in the Riding for the Disabled Association's National Championships on Saturday 13th July which was held at Hartbury, Gloucestershire.**

**I am now National PVI (Partial Visual Impairment) Canter Champion.**



## Mid Devon



**Our Community Support Service in Mid Devon is run by Margaret Vickers.**

### **A week in the life of a Community Support Worker....**

If I had a pound for every time someone asked me if I liked my job, I'd be rich by now! Like it is too mild a word and love it sounds a bit cheesy, so I'll settle for interesting, enjoyable, at times challenging but always very rewarding and never ever boring! No two days are ever the same.

A typical week might mean visiting new clients who may have been referred by family, friends, health workers or even following a chat with someone on a bus! Recently, I met with a lady who had been on the bus with a friend, their conversation about her worsening sight loss, due to diabetic retinopathy and cataracts, was overheard by a lady sitting behind them who said 'Have you heard of Devon in Sight? They will be able to help.' The lady described it as

**Margaret can be contacted through our Head Office on:**

**01392 876 666**

## **Serving Crediton, Cullompton, Tiverton and surrounding districts.**

like 'having an angel there in the right place and at the right time'.

Following a home visit, the client explained that her sight had deteriorated a lot and she was now left with only a sense of seeing dark colours. She said that one of her main aims was getting to grips with technology, especially her iPhone and that she also would like to regain confidence in using a computer for searching the internet, learn how to use Facebook and communicating with others via email. Dave, our volunteer in Cullompton, has offered some one-to-one support to help her get to grips with using the iPhone. I also asked if a talking blood glucose monitor might be useful and explained that all it needed was a quick phone call to the diabetic department at the RD&E and they would pop one in the post and with

support from a community nurse to explain how to use it, she would have greater independence in checking her own glucose levels. She made a note to check this with her GP. She was also keen to attend the next talk and support group to meet others and learn more about the different ways people overcome similar challenges. I don't expect I'll ever find out who the mystery lady on the bus was but I'd like to thank her for passing on the word.

The next day I had the pleasure of accompanying another client, Sam, to a hands-on cookery lesson with Jo Parsons; a professionally trained chef who is also partially sighted. With Jo's gentle encouragement and skilful instructions, Sam successfully cracked eggs for the first time which ended up in the mixing bowl, and not on the floor or with the dreaded

Continued...

## Mid Devon

bits of shell in them which she says is what usually happens! Next, vegetables were gently sautéed on the hob, then topped with the egg mix and a layer of grated cheese and a delicious frittata emerged from the oven 20 minutes later. Meanwhile, a vegetable risotto was simmering away in the slow cooker. With minimal preparation and effort, a cheeky splash of white wine and only an occasional stir, the finished dish was both nutritious and delicious. A pause for lunch and a chance for Sam to rustle up a freshly cooked omelette was followed by hints and tips on how to make and flip American pancakes. Sam commented afterwards, "I really enjoyed the day. Jo is very friendly, and I felt completely at ease. I enjoyed learning how to get around any obstacles to cooking the dishes from someone who understands what it's like to experience sight loss." Sam went home laden with not only supper but plenty more for the freezer!

The week was rounded off beautifully by accepting another invitation to Burlescombe Tea Dance, which is held every Wednesday in the Community Hall from 2.30pm - 5pm. A donation from the club members of £500 was presented and it was an absolute pleasure to join everyone for a delicious tea of home made sandwiches and cakes before taking to the floor for a line dance or two! Anyone interested in finding out more about this friendly group can ring Toby and Margaret Moggridge on 01823 672 340.

If dancing isn't quite your thing, you are still welcome to go along and listen to the music and join them for tea. Everyone is welcome.



## West Devon



**Our Community Support Service in West Devon is run by Rebecca Springbett.**

**It's been an exciting spring in West Devon with many new opportunities for our sight impaired clients.**

In Tavistock we saw the successful completion of the Wellbeing for over 50's course which was organised in partnership with the Livewise/Agewell charity. The sessions were delivered by Mike Knowles assisted by our Community Support Worker Rebecca Springbett. The whole course was very informative and those who attended formed great friendships. The session on mindfulness and relaxation was particularly popular-so much so that we have organised another session on June 6th.

This course has now been introduced to the Okehampton Talk and Support group and will be running in the Ockment Centre from June 21st.

We have finally completed our 4 taster sessions in tactile art

**Rebecca can be contacted through our Head Office on:**

**01392 876 666**

## Serving Holsworthy, Okehampton, Tavistock and surrounding districts.

work. These sessions were organised in partnership with West Devon Art Workshops and were well attended by our enthusiastic, budding artists from the Tavistock Talk and Support Group. The sessions included the creation of wire and modroc figures, block printing, painting splattery flowers and collaged landscapes.



Everyone who attended was amazed at what they managed to achieve. One lady said "It was so lovely to do what I've always wanted to do in such a supportive environment!"

In Tavistock members of the Talk and Support group heard a presentation from Nichola Blackmore of Heritage Ability. This charity is concerned with accessibility and inclusivity of people with disabilities at Heritage sites.

Following on from the talk, a few members of the group will be attending Wheal Martin Clay Works in Cornwall.

They will be reporting back to Heritage Ability regarding their experience and the standard of accessibility features at the site.

A full article about this trip will be in the Autumn Newsletter.

Finally, in August members of the Okehampton Group will be taking advantage of a kind offer from the Holsworthy Macular Group, to join them on a bus trip to Seaton in East Devon. Among other attractions, this will include a ride on the famous tram!

# Sight Loss Adviser



**Richard can be contacted through our Head Office in Kennford on:**

**01392 876 666**

## Richard Bowman

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**Richard Bowman joined the Devon in Sight team in March as our new Sight Loss Adviser.**

Richard can support you with general information and advice and with specialist Daily Living Equipment and Assistive Technology Solutions.

Richard can help you with options for mobile telephones and the increasing number of you who are purchasing computer tablets.

**Appointments are available with Richard in our Consultation Room at Splatford Barton.**

Richard will be touring our **Community Sight Loss Hubs** across the county in the coming weeks to give an overview of his role within the charity.

Dates for these visits are opposite.

**If you would like to speak to Richard give him a call on 01392 876 666.**

## Community Sight Loss Hub Tour Dates

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**Totnes** - Friday 28th June

**Okehampton** - Friday 12th July

**Tavistock** - Thursday 18th July

**Newton Abbot launch** - Thursday 15th August

**Crediton** - Wednesday 21st August

**Cullompton** - Thursday 29th August

**Sidmouth** - Tuesday 17th September

**Tiverton** - Thursday 26th September

**Totnes** - Friday 25th October

**Honiton** - Tuesday 3rd December

**Axminster** - Wednesday 4th December

**Budleigh** - Wednesday 11th December

**Tavistock** - Thursday 19th December

## Gloria Tanner's Story



**It was an annual visit to the Optician that identified a problem with Gloria Tanner's sight.**

**She shares her story of the support she has received from the team at Devon in Sight.**

"In May 2019 I went to a new optician to have my yearly sight check with no idea that something might be wrong but there was.

They detected Age-related Macular Degeneration (AMD) something I had never heard of before. On the way home the realisation of what this meant hit me hard and I became an emotional wreck. How could I manage my life without my sight?

Fortunately for me, Richard Bowman, the Community Sight Loss Advisor for Devon in Sight, was on the other end of my phone and his calm voice telling me he completely understood how I felt, steadied and comforted me.

I told him about the things I love - my books, watching films, my garden and my home. I asked him how could I continue to do these things if I couldn't see.

**"I must thank you for the incredible support I have received since I first picked up the phone!"**

So an appointment was made for me to visit Richard at Devon in Sight's Head Office outside Exeter.

During my time with him, he showed me how to access audio books and how to adapt my iPad to my new needs. He also showed me Daily Living Aids that I could use later on. He told me that sight loss is like a bereavement with all its different emotional levels so I am prepared for that.

What made all of this so inspiring was the fact that Richard has severe sight loss and has a 'lived experience' over many years.

Unlike many people with advanced Macular Disease, I am at the beginning of my journey. It is not something I want to undertake and I feel very fearful about the future but the amount of help and support I have already received helps.

Community Support Worker Tracey Agutter, has put me in touch with many different community groups so I am looking forward to meeting them and hearing about their experiences.

In conclusion, I must thank Devon in Sight for the incredible support I have received since I first picked up my phone and for all the dedicated work you do".

**If you have received a service from Devon in Sight and you would like to share your experience with others please speak to your Community Support Worker or give us a call.**

Don't miss out...

## What's on

### Axminster Hub

On the first Wednesday, every other month from 10.00am - 12.00pm at the Senior Citizens' Centre, Church Street, Axminster, EX13 5AG.

**Dates:** Aug 7th, Oct 2nd and Dec 4th.

### Budleigh Salterton Hub

On the second Wednesday, every other month from 10.00am - 12.00pm at the Health and Wellbeing Hub, Budleigh Salterton Hospital, East Budleigh Road, Budleigh Salterton EX9 6HF.

**Dates:** Aug 14th, Oct 9th and Dec 11th.

### Crediton Hub

On the third Wednesday, every other month from 1.30pm to 3.00pm at Crediton Library, Belle Parade, Crediton EX17 2AA

**Dates:** Aug 21st, Oct 23rd and Dec 18th.

### Cullompton Hub

Usually on the last Thursday, every other month from 10.00am to 12.30pm at The Hayridge, Exeter Hill, Cullompton, EX15 1DJ.

Please see dates below or call 01392 876 666 to check.

**Dates:** Aug 29th, Sep 19th, Oct 31st, Nov 21st and Dec 19th.

Don't miss out...

## What's on

**New Hub  
Launched**

### Honiton Hub

On the first Tuesday, every other month from 10.00am to 12.00pm at the Beehive Community Centre, Dowell Street, Honiton EX14 1LZ.

**Dates:** Aug 6th, Oct 1st and Dec 3rd.

**NEW for Honiton Hub** - From 12.00 to 12.30 Assistive Technology Session for individuals to share their smart phone/tablet knowledge & tips.

### Newton Abbot Hub (NEW HUB)

Monthly from 10.30am to 12.30pm at The Passmore Edwards Centre, Market Street, Newton Abbot TQ12 2RJ.

**Dates:** Aug 15th, Sept 20th, Oct 17th, Nov 21st, Dec 19th and Jan 16th 2020.

### Okehampton Hub in association with The Macular Society

On the second Friday of the month from 10.00am to 12.00pm at The Ockment Centre, North St, Okehampton EX20 1AR.

**Dates:** Aug 9th, Sep 13th, Oct 11th, Nov 8th and Dec 13th.

### Sidmouth Hub

On the third Tuesday, of the month from 10.00am to 12.00pm at Twyford House, Magnolia Cottage, Coburg Rd, Sidmouth EX10 8NF

**Dates:** Aug 20th, Sep 17th, Oct 15th, Nov 19th and Dec 17th.

These dates are correct when going to press, please ring to confirm...

## What's on

New Hub  
Launched

### Tavistock Hub

On the third Thursday of the month from 11.30am to 1pm at The Anchorage Centre, Chapel Street, Tavistock PL18 8AG.

**Dates:** Aug 15th, Sep 19th, Oct 17th, Nov 21st and Dec 19th

### Teignmouth Hub (NEW HUB)

On the first Tuesday of the month from 10.30am to 12.00pm at Cliffden Hotel, 20 Dawlish Rd, Teignmouth TQ14 8TE

**Dates:** Sept 3rd, Oct 1st, Nov 5th and Dec 3rd.

### Tiverton Hub

On the last Thursday, every other month from 10.00am to 12.30pm at Old Heathcoat School Community Centre, 81 King St, Tiverton EX16 5JJ.

**Dates:** Jul 25th, Sep 26th and Nov 28th.

### Torquay Hub

On the second Thursday of the month from 10.30am to 12.00pm at St Matthias' Church, Babbacombe Road, Torquay TQ1 1HW

**Dates:** Aug 8th, Sept 12th, Oct 10th, Nov 14th and Dec 12th.

### Totnes Hub in association with The Macular Society

On the fourth Friday of the month from 10.30am to 12.30pm at The Rushbrook Centre, Station Road, Totnes TQ9 5HW.

**Dates:** Aug 23rd, Sep 27th, Oct 25th, Nov 22nd.

Don't miss out...

## 2019 AGM Announced



▲ Voting at the 2018 AGM

**Our AGM will be held at The Hayridge Centre, 1 Exeter Hill, Cullompton EX15 1DJ on Friday 18 October 2019 between 2.00pm and 4.00pm.**

The Annual General Meeting is a business meeting about the governance of the charity. It is your opportunity to hear from our Chair, CEO and Treasurer about the last year's work and our plans for the future.

Registered Voting Members of Devon in Sight will receive their personal invitations from our Chair Dr Adrian Jacobs through the post in September. If you cannot make the meeting there will be Proxy Voting Forms enclosed with the invitation so you can vote.

**If you are not a Voting Member and would like to come to the AGM please contact Elizabeth Twining our Membership Secretary through our Head Office on 01392 876 666.**



**Devon in Sight**  
Your local sight loss charity

**01392 876 666**

[enquiries@devoninsight.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@devoninsight.org.uk)  
[www.devoninsight.org.uk](http://www.devoninsight.org.uk)

**Devon in Sight**  
Splatford Barton, Kennford,  
Exeter, EX6 7XY.

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