



Devon in Sight
Your local sight loss charity



In Vision

The magazine of Devon in Sight

Spring 2023 Issue 34



**Clinical
Research
and Trials
Feature
Pages 12-15**

connecting
you

Getting out and
about this spring!

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Chief Executive Officer's

Welcome



Welcome to the Spring Edition of In Vision Magazine.

Spring, for many, is a symbol of new beginnings. When the first green emerges from the ground and the first bud opens, people the world over celebrate life's triumph over death.

Flowers bloom for the first time in months, against the ruthlessness of ice and snow. Animals awaken from winter-induced hibernation. The sun shines again, bringing an end to the enduring darkness of the past three months. The earth comes to life once more.

They say that dreams shape the world. Devon in Sight's dream is to make Devon a sight loss friendly county. Part of this work is being undertaken in partnership with Devon County Council.

In this edition we are encouraging you to try and get out and about more this spring, particularly using public and community transport. We are promoting the **Devon Access Wallet** as part of our Tackling Loneliness with Transport Project.

Our programme of **Living Well with Sight Loss Events** continue around Devon with the aim of reducing isolation through technology and transport.

We have also updated our **Social Club Directory** so you can try and engage with other people who are blind or partially sighted in your local community.

Spring is definitely in the air!

Grahame

Grahame Flynn

Chief Executive Officer

Devon in Sight is registered with the Helplines Partnership

Helpline 01392 876 666

The Helpline is open between 10am and 2pm Monday to Friday

An Overview of Our Services

Devon in Sight offers a range of holistic services for people who are blind or partially sighted, their families, friends and carers who live or work in Devon.

This is a summary of our core services.

Our Information, Advice and Guidance Service

We are committed to providing accurate and impartial Information, Advice and Guidance. You can access our comprehensive information resources through our Helpline on **01392 876 666**. Our website is available at **www.devoninsight.org.uk**

In Vision Magazine is available FREE in a range of accessible formats - large print, digitally via email and in audio. It can also be accessed on your smart phone through the **British Wireless for the Blind App** and your Alexa Smart Speaker through the **Talking Newspaper Skill**.

Our Independent Living Service

We work with you to identify the equipment, support and training that will help you maintain your independence and live life to the full. We undertake this valuable work in partnership with Health and Social Care and the voluntary sector.

We have a unique **Assistive Technology Partnership** with Sight and Sound Ltd., the UK's leading provider of equipment, software and services for people who are blind and partially sighted.

We also offer **Living Well with Sight Loss Events** across the county where you can meet partners in Health & Social care, the voluntary sector and community groups.

Supporting people affected by sight loss in Devon

Our Health & Wellbeing Service

Our Health and Wellbeing Service aims to help keep you physically and mentally fit and safe in your home. We can help you make some healthy lifestyle choices such as smoking cessation or arrange a FREE home safety check with the Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service. We can also provide **emotional support** and in some cases **formal counselling**.

For fun, friendship and really useful information about living life with low vision you can join our free telephone based **Chit-Chat Calls**. To access the calls simply dial **0808 169 79 30** at **10.30am every Wednesday morning**.

Our free **Telephone Speaker Seminars** take place monthly with speakers from across the sight loss sector and beyond. These are structured so that following a formal information sharing presentation; listeners can contribute by asking questions and share their lived experiences of sight loss. **A schedule of events and joining instructions can be found on pages 8 and 9.**

Influencing Change

We believe that it is important that people who are blind or partially sighted, their family and carers have a voice in the development of sight loss services and other community services across Devon. We therefore provide a **Sight Loss Forum** and other ways for you to help influence change.

For more information about our services please ring...

Helpline 01392 876 666

The Helpline is open between 10am and 2pm Monday to Friday

News Desk

Elizabeth Twining Retires

Our Membership Officer Elizabeth Twining has recently retired from Devon in Sight.

Elizabeth has volunteered for us for many years, maintaining our Voting Membership, and helping us with a number of research projects and surveys, mailing out the magazine and supporting us at events.

We wish to extend our sincere thanks to Elizabeth and her partner Mike who have supported us for so many years.



▲ Elizabeth Twining at a recent event in Paighton

Local Visually Impaired Social Club Closures

Devon in Sight continues to promote all the Independent Social Clubs for people who are blind or partially sighted and those affiliated with the Macular Society to our clients.

However, running any community group is very challenging particularly when it comes to recruiting voluntary helpers post COVID-19. We were therefore very sad to hear about the closure of a number of Devon's VI Clubs.

Terry Grimsley the Chair of Seaton & District Club for the Visually Impaired wrote to us recently to inform us that the club was closing after 30 years.

Keeping people affected by sight loss in Devon informed

Naturally, we are working with Terry to ensure that his members are registered with Devon in Sight so that they can receive In Vision Magazine and access our services.

We have also heard that Sidmouth Blind Club and Tiverton Blind Club have also closed. This is terribly sad news.

If you would like to join your local Club for the Visually Impaired we have included an updated VI Social Club Directory on pages 38 to 41.

Honiton Lions Club Sponsors Technology Event

Devon in Sight would like to thank Honiton Lions for their very generous donation towards our Technology Event held in Honiton on 18 October 2022.

The day was well attended and hugely successful and without donations such as these we would be unable to hold as many events as we do.

Honiton Lions are currently recruiting new members and if you are interested in joining the Lions please call Brian 'The Lion' Richards on 01404 437 38.



For more information about these stories please ring...

Helpline 01392 876 666

The Helpline is open between 10am and 2pm Monday to Friday

Telephone Speaker Seminars

In November 2020 Devon in Sight introduced a programme free Telephone-based Sight Loss Seminars where people could hear from our partners across the Health and Social Care and Voluntary sectors, in the comfort of their own homes.

These events are far from passive and are structured so that following a formal information sharing presentation; listeners can contribute by asking questions and share their lived experiences of sight loss. This service has proved to be so well received that it continues monthly, attracting speakers from across the sight loss sector and beyond.

An archive of previous seminars is accessible through the Devon in Sight Website under the Health & Wellbeing section.

Sight Loss Speaker Seminars take place every second Tuesday of the month at 10.30am on Freephone 0808 169 79 30. Calls from your home telephone or mobile are FREE.

Tuesday 14 March 2023

'Gardening By Touch, Sound, Smell and Taste'

Discover new ways of engaging with and enjoying nature as a blind or partially sighted person.

Our Guest Speaker is **Andrew Hesser**, the man behind Bryan's Quest, a website and YouTube channel dedicated to exploring the natural world from the perspective of Bryan, a blind person.



▲ Andrew Hesser

Tuesday 11 April 2023

'Tackling Loneliness with Transport: Connecting You Project'

Introducing Devon County Council's Connecting You Project. Understanding how transport can play a role in helping people who are feeling lonely.

Our Guest Speaker is **Karen Rose** a **Community Transport Adviser, Transport Co-ordination Service, Devon County Council.**



▲ Karen Rose



Tuesday 9 May 2023

'All you need is sleep!'

Good-quality sleep makes a big difference to how we feel, mentally and physically, so it's important to get enough.

Our Guest Speaker is **Devon in Sight's Counsellor Annie Ford.**

Annie will talk about the importance of good sleep and give some ideas of how to achieve it.



▲ Annie Ford

To access Telephone Sight Loss Speaker Seminars ring...

Tel: 0808 169 79 30

Calls from your home telephone or mobile are **FREE**

Blue Peter: Behind the Badge



▲ Grahame Flynn with Blue Peter's Alex Leger

Devon in Sight's, Sight Loss Speaker Seminars have largely focused around sight loss specific topics, with speakers from Health & Social Care as well as the voluntary sector.

Our February event was a little different. Our guest was Alex Leger, a Television Producer, Director and Cameraman. For 36 years Alex worked on the classic BBC television programme, 'Blue Peter' as the show's most prolific film maker. Blue Peter is the longest-running children's TV show in the world, having been broadcast since October 1958.

When Alex joined Blue Peter in 1975 the line up was John Noakes, Peter Purves and Lesley Judd and he then worked with everyone of the 27 presenters that followed until his retirement in 2011.

Listeners were delighted to hear Alex's behind the scenes stories of working on the series in the studios at BBC Television Centre and on location around the world.

In the years before Health & Safety Risk Assessments, Alex shared his experience of directing his 1977 film of John Noakes scaling Nelson's Column, in Trafalgar Square.

In 1999 Alex made a film about climbing Mount Kilimanjaro a dormant volcano in Tanzania, Africa. What made this expedition so special is that it was made with Sightsavers. Sightsavers continues to this day working in more than 30 countries to prevent avoidable blindness and fights for the rights of people with disabilities. The Blue Peter team were joined by six British and six African children with little or no sight on the trek to the summit. Alex shared stories of the effect of altitude sickness on the older members of the group.

Alex's book, 'Blue Peter, Behind the Badge' is a revealing, behind-the-scenes journey through four decades of the nation's favourite children's programme. The book is available through Amazon. We are exploring ways that it can be made as an audio book.

To access the interview please visit our Sight Loss Speaker Seminar Archive. Alex's 2019 film about Devon in Sight can also be seen on our 'Donate to Devon in Sight' page.

To access our **Speaker Seminar Archive**, please visit...

www.devoninsight.org.uk

Recordings are available under 'Events'.

Clinical Research & Trials

The Retina Clinic London is the United Kingdom's first and only private self-contained dedicated retina clinic.

It is located on Harley Street, London, and is led by Professor Paulo-Eduardo Stanga, one of the most qualified vitreoretinal surgeons and specialist in retinal diseases. Professor Stanga, is an expert in his field and an international Key Opinion Leader with over 30 years of experience in Ophthalmology.



▲ Professor Stanga

Professor Stanga has pioneered many diagnostic technologies, treatments, and clinical trials. Amongst others, he has performed the first gene therapy surgery for Dry Age-related Macular Degeneration (Dry AMD) with Geographic Atrophy (GA) in the United Kingdom outside of a teaching hospital and as part of a clinical trial. Therefore, he is keen to make patients aware that there is choice outside of teaching hospitals to access Clinical Trials.

When no approved treatments are available, Professor Stanga and his dedicated research team have a passion for bringing the most innovative treatments to patients in the form of Clinical Trials. Clinical Trials can be an option for patients who have previously been told that there is nothing else that can be done for them, when there are no approved treatments for their retinal disease, i.e., "Dry" Age-related Macular Degeneration.

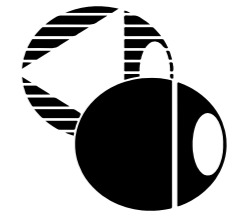
"There is a choice outside of teaching hospitals to access clinical trials."

The Retina Clinic London is also running Clinical Trials for diseases where there are already established treatments, but newer and potentially more effective drugs are being trialled, or new drugs for patients who are not responding to traditional methods of treatment in, for example, Diabetic Macular Oedema or "Wet" Age-related Macular Degeneration. Sometimes even to extend the interval between treatment sessions in chronic diseases.

All current Clinical Trials are Industry-sponsored and are therefore at no cost to patients. Patients can even be reimbursed for travel and accommodation expenses (maximum reimbursement amounts are dependent on each clinical trial).

The Retina Clinic London offers Clinical Trials for patients with Diabetic Macular Oedema (DME), Dry Age-related Macular Degeneration (Dry AMD) with Geographic Atrophy (GA) and Wet Age-related Macular Degeneration (Wet AMD).

Professor Stanga is Principal Investigator, Examiner, and Surgeon for all Clinical Trials at The Retina Clinic London and is supported by his research team. All diagnostic tests and treatments are carried out on-site at The Retina Clinic London.



THE RETINA CLINIC
LONDON

For more information about **Accessing Clinical Trials** ring...

Helpline 01392 876 666

The Helpline is open between 10am and 2pm Monday to Friday

Clinical Research & Trials

Research into sight loss would not be possible without the help of people living with sight loss conditions. In this issue we are exploring opportunities for you to be involved in clinical research and trials.

Devon in Sight Client Ray Doughty (76) shares his story.

“In 2010, I was sailing around Britain with three friends when I noticed that my sight had deteriorated, particularly at night. Having returned home, I visited my GP and he referred me to the Eye Unit at Torbay Hospital.

The Consultant Ophthalmologist diagnosed Dry Macular Degeneration in my left eye. At my request he gave me a rather blunt explanation of what to expect in the years to come. I had some experience of the disease, my mother late in her life suffered with it. One of a number of suggestions the Consultant made was for me to join the Macular Society, a national charity for people living with Macular Disease.

My main concern was the thought of my daughters, and future grand children suffering with this awful disease. With this in mind, I requested the Macular Society place my name on the database for those who were keen to participate in clinical research and trails to eradicate, or stem development of the disease.

Over time Dry Macular Degeneration developed in my right eye too. The progression was much as the consultant had described in 2010. In 2012 my younger sister was diagnosed with the disease too. In December 2019 I was registered as Severely Sight Impaired which meant I was officially blind.

“My main concern was the thought of my daughters, and future grand children suffering with this awful disease.”

In early 2021 my name was taken from the Macular Society database, and passed to The Retina Clinic London under the leadership of Professor Paulo-Eduardo Stanga.

The Retina Clinic made contact, and invited me for a day of eye tests to establish whether I was suitable for a clinical trial. On arrival I immediately felt at ease. The staff were professional, kind, and understanding. From the results of these tests I was invited by Professor Stanga to join the clinical trial.

Full details of the trial were passed in hard copy format so that if I felt the need, I could discuss any concerns with any other party. I was pleased that the staff talked about risk and expectations of the trial and gave me a cut off period before starting the trial.

I made the decision to join the trial, happy in the knowledge that I was making a contribution to ensure that my children may never suffer with the disease.

Throughout the trial I have found the Clinic a pleasure to visit, always a warm welcome on arrival. All my expenses are reimbursed by the Clinic for my Study Visits. My trial will soon end, but Professor Stanga knows that if a suitable trial becomes available to me, I am ready to volunteer. I have no hesitation in recommending the Clinic to others who suffer with the disease. I am happy to be doing my part for future generations.”

We would like to thank Ray Doughty for sharing his experiences at the Retina Clinic London. Devon in Sight recommends that all decisions regarding treatment and trials are discussed with a Health Care Professional.

Men's Health - Prostate Cancer

Devon in Sight's CEO Grahame Flynn says, "Gentlemen, we are aware of a number of clients who are receiving treatment for prostate cancer. I recently went through a number of painless tests myself so if you have any of the risk factors or symptoms do something now!"

In the UK, about 1 in 8 men will be diagnosed with prostate cancer in their lifetime. It's the most common cancer in men, but most men with early prostate cancer don't have symptoms.

Prostate cancer is not always life-threatening. But when it is, the earlier you catch it the more likely it is to be cured. They don't know exactly what causes prostate cancer but there are some things that may mean you are more likely to get it - these are called risk factors.

There are three main prostate cancer risk factors, which are things you can't change. **These are getting older - it mainly affects men aged 50 or over, having a family history of prostate cancer or being black.** If you have any of these risk factors or if you have any symptoms (listed below) speak to your General Practitioner (GP) or a Specialist Nurse from Prostate Cancer UK.

There's no way of knowing if you have prostate cancer without visiting your doctor, as most men with early prostate cancer don't have any symptoms. If you do have symptoms they can be caused by other things.



1 in 8 men will get prostate cancer. If you're over 50, or you're black, or your dad or brother had it, you're at even higher risk.

If you do notice changes in the way you urinate, this is more likely to be a sign of a very common non-cancerous problem called an enlarged prostate, or another health problem. But it's still a good idea to get it checked out.

Possible symptoms of prostate cancer include:

- difficulty starting to urinate or emptying your bladder
- a weak flow when you urinate
- a feeling that your bladder hasn't emptied properly
- dribbling urine after you finish urinating
- needing to urinate more often than usual, especially at night
- a sudden need to urinate - you may sometimes leak urine before you get to the toilet.

These symptoms can all be caused by other health problems. But it's still a good idea to tell your GP about any symptoms so they can find out what's causing them and make sure you get the right treatment, if you need it. Your GP can give you more information or tests if necessary.

We would like to thank Prostate Cancer UK for their support with this article.

To speak to a **Specialist Nurse from Prostate Cancer UK**

Ring 0800 074 8383

For more information visit www.prostatecanceruk.org

Domestic Abuse Awareness



The team at Devon in Sight have recently been made aware of the fact that a number of callers into the Health & Wellbeing Service have experienced domestic violence and abuse. Much of this abuse is by carers or partners but not exclusively. Some have reported abuse at the hands of the general public.

Domestic abuse is behaviour from a family member, partner or ex-partner. It can happen to people of all genders. It can include:

- physical or sexual abuse
- violent or threatening behaviour
- psychological or emotional abuse
- coercive behaviour - for example, humiliation or intimidation

“If you’re a victim of domestic violence or abuse, there are many different organisations which can help you.”

- **controlling behaviour** - for example, making someone feel less important or dependent on the abuser
- **‘economic abuse’** - this includes controlling someone’s possessions or how they earn or spend money.

If you’re a victim of domestic violence or abuse, there are many different organisations which can help you.

Support for Women

The **National Domestic Abuse Helpline** is a freephone 24 hour helpline which provides advice and support to women and can refer them to emergency accommodation.

Telephone: 0808 2000 247



Support for Men

The **Men’s Advice Line** is a confidential helpline for all men experiencing domestic violence by a current or ex-partner.

Telephone: 0808 8010 327



Please remember: If there is an emergency call the Police on 999.

For confidential advice and support please ring us on...

Helpline 01392 876 666

The Helpline is open between 10am and 2pm Monday to Friday

Spring Clean - Clutter Free Home

Clutter in the home can cause extra problems for anyone with sight loss. The spring is a great opportunity to clear away anything you don't need, or don't love.

Getting rid of clutter will also mean that you have more time to do the things you enjoy as there will be less cleaning, less stuff to organise and things will be easier to find. This could even help you feel calmer and less stressed.



You'll still have the things you love around you and can really appreciate them, so you should feel happier too. One of the callers to our Wednesday Chit-Chat Calls told us about his experience.

"I live in a flat so I don't have an attic, but I do have a small narrow storage room. When I first moved here, I put all of my treasured vinyl records and CDs on the shelves in the store but over time that space had become so full that I couldn't even get into it. I decided to tackle it, just doing a small amount at a time. It wasn't easy, but little by little I decided what I really wanted to keep. I had a beautiful cashmere and wool coat hung over a chair for a good two weeks before I was ready to let that go! I learned to let go of the old me and embrace the new me who is living with sight loss, and I feel good about life and who I am now."

Here are some tips that will help you start, choose the ones that suit you best.

"Anything new must add great value to my life, either because it's really helpful or because it makes me smile"

- Only do 5 minutes de-cluttering to start with and work up to 15 minutes a day. Tackle one room at a time.
- Set mini decluttering goals. Perhaps a sock drawer, a wallet, a bedside table or a shelf in the bathroom.
- Use baskets and label them Throw, Give Away, Keep, Put Away and Maybe for things you're unsure about. When you tackle a room it's easier to clear the clutter.
- Give something away every day. That would be 365 things gone from you home each year!
- Fill a rubbish bag once a week.
- Donate clothes you never wear. If you haven't worn something for a year, chances are, you never will!
- Set your own challenge. For example, 6 things to throw away, 6 things to donate to a charity shop and 6 things that you can put away properly.
- Make a "One in, One out" rule.
- See your home through the eyes of a visitor. This could be all the motivation you need.
- And finally, get help from a friend.

Once you have a clutter-free home, you can decide how to keep it that way.

Make your own rule, perhaps "Anything new must add great value to my life, either because it's really helpful or because it makes me smile."

Living Well with Sight Loss Events



▲ Grahame Flynn & Tony Shrubbs at our Paignton Event

Last year we held a number of Assistive Technology Events across Devon. Many of you benefited from meeting Tony Shrubbs from Sight and Sound Technology, the largest supplier of low vision equipment in the country.

We have expanded these events to include more partners from the sight loss sector such as Blind Veterans UK, RNIB Technology Support Volunteers, Talking Newspapers, Sensory Team Rehabilitation Officers, local Blind Clubs, Lions Clubs, the Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service and community transport.

These expanded events are now called **Living Well with Sight Loss Events**. Our registered clients who live in the vicinity of each of these events will receive an invitation closer to the dates.

'We have expanded our events to include more partners from the Sight Loss Sector and local communities'

Spring Events Calendar

South Molton Event

Tuesday 28 March 2023

(10am - 2pm)

South Molton Library, Amory House, 125 East Street, South Molton EX36 3BU.

Kingsbridge Event

Thursday 20 April 2022

(10am - 2pm)

Kingsbridge Care Hub, Quay House, 4 Ilbert Road, Kingsbridge TQ7 1DZ.



▲ Tony Shrubbs with a client

We are currently planning future **Living Well with Sight Loss Events** in Tavistock, Tiverton and Exeter.

Our Living Well with Sight Loss Events are supported by our Assistive Technology Partner, Sight and Sound Technology and Devon County Council.

If transport is a barrier to you attending our community based events we want to hear from you.



For info about our **Living with Sight Loss Events** please ring...

Helpline 01392 876 666

The Helpline is open between 10am and 2pm Monday to Friday

My Experiences of Accessing Buses



▲ A Bus in Exeter High Street

Jane Arklay totally lost her sight as a young woman in her early twenties. She went through some good rehabilitation, developing good long cane skills and eventually had a Guide Dog. Jane had a young daughter, attended college, and worked as a full time professional Youth and Community Worker. She lived a full time life.

During this time she lived in a different part of the country to Devon. She would have been described as somebody with excellent mobility skills. She used public transport most days around her local area and on a regular basis travelled via train to places like London and then across London itself.

“Sadly, my early experiences of accessing public transport, have not been positive.”

About twelve years ago Jane had a sudden medical emergency which changed everything.

Jane recalls, “I have been fortunate to have survived against the odds having had four lifesaving, high risk open heart operations.

During the last twelve years I have been unable to work, unable to travel around, and due to the physical health delicacies I had, I was unable to go anywhere without another person with me. As a result I have lost my excellent level of independent mobility skills. This was further complicated by a move to Devon.

Despite all these challenges I now feel able to start going out and about again independently. The problem is twelve years is a long time and I live in a different area which is unfamiliar to me.

Thankfully, I am working with a mobility officer, to regain my mobility skills and to rebuild my confidence in getting out and about. It is early days, and the only mode of public transport I have engaged with is the local bus service. This makes sense for me to try to master first, as it is my main mode of transport in and out of Exeter City Centre, which is about 3 miles from where I live.

Sadly, my early experiences of accessing public transport, have not been positive. I am left with anxiety reactions, which is not my usual response to situations.

Independent Living Service Case Study

Accessing Buses



The first issue is accessing the bus stop where I live. The bus stop is by a tree. This tree has a big hole surrounding it. I have spent a good few weeks learning how to ensure my foot does not get twisted in the hole. A good fence around the tree area would have saved me a lot of time and energy.

Then there has been the issue of reliability. With my Mobility Officer, we check out the times of the bus, confirming them on the bus company website. It's very frustrating to be stood at the bus stop an hour later, with still no bus turning up. This has happened a good few times.

One of the times standing there the neighbour who lives just by this bus stop came out to inform us that the buses not turning up when they are supposed to is a regular occurrence.

“Sadly, my early experiences of accessing public transport, have not been positive.”

This unreliability has certainly made me feel very unsettled about learning to build up confidence again in accessing and using public transport.

Another issue is, that when I'm actually on a bus I am surprised to find no stop announcements. I know you can ask the bus driver to let you know, but I also know bus drivers are human and have more than just me as their passenger to consider, and sometimes they forget to let you know. So having announcement systems in place provides reassurance that one will get off at the right stop. I say I was surprised, because over twelve years ago, I have certainly travelled on buses in London where these announcement systems were reliably operating. Unfortunately, this again makes me feel very nervous about using the buses to get out and about.

In addition, I have concerns around locating the bus stop at the other end for my return journey, as well as some anxieties about knowing whether a bus is approaching the bus stop, and whether if it is the bus I need.

I do not know how things will pan out. For now I am continuing to work with my Mobility Officer. We are still working on my first route, which involves taking a bus to my local GP surgery. I hope to get this route ticked off soon, so I can begin to tackle travelling into Exeter City Centre. I am feeling extremely nervous about this, and I am not sure how far I will get in this process in trying to regain back my independent mobility skills. I do hope that things can be improved to help me stand a little chance at least.

I am now considering some solutions to these concerns, as I am sure there are complexities involved. But if given free rein in what would make Devon buses accessible to me as a visually impaired person, then they would be the following.

1. I would like each bus stop to have a consistent name, which is standardise and clear, so if a Smart Phone App is made available then the name of the bus stop can be confidently relied upon.
2. To have some kind of bus stop announcement system. This is to ensure certainty that one has located the correct bus stop and therefore is waiting at the right one for their bus, especially in areas, where there might be more than one bus stop close by to each other. Maybe this could be achieved via a Smart Phone App or something such like. Then perhaps shown to mobility officers so they could pass this on to the people they work with.
3. A good accessible way of understanding any delays so at least if reliability is a problem then a visually impaired person can at least be informed. Naturally, I would prefer a reduction in these reliability issues.
4. A way to be informed what number bus is approaching the bus stop in plenty of time for a visually impaired person to navigate their way to the bus stop and be in a safe position to alert the bus driver that one would like the bus to stop.
5. Having a safe way for me to indicate that I am waiting for a bus is essential. The last thing a visually impaired person needs to do is stand with their arm out in the road for half an hour risking a lorry coming along and knocking their arm

“Sadly, my early experiences of accessing public transport, have not been positive.”

or head off. After all a lorry engine can sometimes sound like a bus engine, and lorries sometimes travel very close to the pavement with their wing mirrors hanging over into the pavement area. I have felt very unsafe at my local bus stop, because the vehicles speed up a little at that point and sometimes wing mirrors do hang over the pavement.

6. I would love to be sitting safely in my seat before the driver moves off. Failure to do this can be very frightening.
7. For all buses to have an announcement system in place. This could be an automated announcement or the driver saying, “The next bus stop will be”.
8. A second announcement when the bus has stopped would confirm the stop.

I hope I have been able to highlight some of the issues a person living with a visual impairment has accessing local buses.

Here I am continuing with my mobility rehabilitation in the hope that things can be improved for better and safer accessibility going forward.

We would like to thank Jane Arklay for her article. This will form a case study for the Devon County Council ‘Connecting You Project’.

For more information, advice and guidance please ring...

Helpline 01392 876 666

The Helpline is open between 10am and 2pm Monday to Friday



▲ Guest Speakers (L-R) Tessa Barrett, Grahame Flynn, Leila Manion, Tim Lamerton and Karen Rose.

In the last edition of In Vision Magazine we shared with you that Devon in Sight had partnered with Devon County Council's Connecting You Project with the aim of tackling loneliness through transport across the county.

The **Driver Awareness Training Programme** recognises how critical the role of the driver is to a passenger's journey experience of public and community transport. We are helping drivers to overcome their own concerns about offering help to passengers with protected characteristics such as a disability.

During February, March and April staff from Devon in Sight, Living Options Devon and North Devon Voluntary Services are delivering a training programme to our smaller & medium sized commercial bus operators and community transport providers.

The course content includes Disability Law and awareness sessions around disabilities both visible and invisible, wheelchair users, and people living with dementia and sight loss.

Staff participating in the training have already increased their knowledge and skills when offering support and assistance to anyone living with low vision. They'll also be helping our mission to make Devon a better place for people who are blind or partially sighted to live.

Evaluations of the course have been very encouraging with participants giving very positive feedback. One delegate summed it up by simply saying, "It was an excellent course!"

Feedback from Public and Community Transport Drivers is also helping us develop the training but also highlights what would make dealing with the public easier for them.

There were calls from the drivers for people with sight loss to make it clearer that they have an issue. This can be achieved by using a Devon Access Wallet, carrying a symbol cane, wearing a Partially Sighted Badge or Sunflower Lanyard. It was clear that many drivers are keen to support people on their journeys.

You can read more about the Devon Access Wallet Scheme on page 32.



▲ Leila Manion

The Devon Access Wallet Scheme

Do you often find public transport difficult to use and find the experience stressful and isolating?

Do you lack the confidence to travel independently?



The Devon Access Wallet Scheme has been developed to help make journeys by bus or train easier for anyone with communication difficulties, people with disabilities, deaf people and those whose first language is not English. It will also give transport staff a better understanding of the requirements of all disabled passengers.

Devon County Council has worked in partnership with First Devon & Cornwall, First Great Western and Stagecoach Devon to devise the scheme.

Susan, a Client from East Devon said, “After losing my car last week I was feeling very low and called Devon in Sight to see what help was available. They understood the impact of no longer being able to drive and provided me with information and reassurance to travel by public transport.

The Devon Access Wallet was a big help to give me the confidence to use public transport. After my first journey I contacted the charity as I didn’t know that there was so much help out there.”

The wallet has been carefully designed with a fluorescent orange cover to let transport staff know that people carrying it may need help with their journey.

The Devon Access Wallet contains plastic pockets into which cards can be placed to help communication with staff. At Devon in Sight we have produced some cards for people who are blind or partially sighted.

These include:

- I have a visual impairment
- Single or return fare please
- Can you please let me know when we get to my stop?
- Which platform do I catch my train from?
- Emergency Contact Details

Please note the access wallet does not give you free or discounted travel. If you are over 60 or disabled you may be entitled to free bus travel in Devon or a Senior or Disabled Persons rail card.

Devon in Sight is working in partnership with Devon County Council to promote the scheme.



To order your **Devon Access Wallet & Cards** please ring...

Helpline 01392 876 666

The Helpline is open between 10am and 2pm Monday to Friday

Community Fundraising



£1000
raised!

Kingsbridge Estuary Rotary Club put the fun into Fundraising!

On Friday 27th January members of Kingsbridge Estuary Rotary Club held a wine tasting evening to raise funds for Devon in Sight.

Rotary Club members, together with wine loving friends including the Town Mayor, spent a thoroughly enjoyable evening sampling their way through a carefully curated wine list of 14 wines. Before anyone cries 'drunkards', it was all in a very good cause.

The wines were an eclectic mix of oddies but goodies chosen by the host from her 'liquid journey through life' and represented a very welcome change from the more usual selections on offer at commercial wine tastings.

Our Community supporting people living with sight loss in Devon

Paired with a delectable array of charcuterie, home cured gravadlax, cheese platters and rich fruit cake for contrast, it was a wonderful way to while away a few hours and do some good at the same time. Certainly everyone went home with that warm, fuzzy feeling.

Thanks to the generosity of the Rotary Club members who manfully slurped their way through to the end, together with all those members who whilst not imbibers themselves still wanted to support their President's Charity, the sum of £1,000 has been handed over to Devon In Sight.

The team at Devon in Sight would like to extend our sincere thanks to Amanda Bloomer, the President of Kingsbridge Estuary Rotary Club for supporting Devon in Sight during her term of office.

There are 46,000 Rotary and Rotaract Clubs around the world, it's easy to find a club that fits your passion and purpose. If you are interested in becoming a Rotarian please visit www.rotary.org



For more information about Fundraising please ring...

Helpline 01392 876 666

The Helpline is open between 10am and 2pm Monday to Friday

Supporting us

How you can help us



For nearly 100 years, people like you have helped Devon in Sight to provide essential support services to people with little or no sight across the whole of Devon.

Your generosity is astonishing. We would like to thank all of you who have made one off donations, or become regular donors through our **Friends of Devon in Sight Regular Giving Scheme**.

Could you spare the cost of a cup of coffee to help fund future editions of this magazine, to provide counselling sessions for people in crisis, to keep our telephone support services running?

Our vital work changes lives. We know that times are hard for everyone, but if you are able to support us with a small donation, it means we can continue this vital work.

It has never been more important to do your bit to support your local sight loss charity

There are a number of ways that you can help Devon in Sight financially to continue supporting people with sight loss across Devon.

Friends of Devon in Sight

Our Regular Giving Scheme 'Friends of Devon in Sight' is the best way that you can support your charity during these very challenging times. Give as little or as much as you would like with a monthly direct debit.

Make a One Off Donation by over the Telephone

You can make a card donation over the telephone by ringing the main Helpline number.

Make a One Off Donation by Cheque

Please make cheques payable to 'Devon in Sight' and send to: **The Office Manager, Devon in Sight, Splatford Barton, Kennford, Exeter EX6 7XY.**

Make a One Off Donation by Bank Transfer

You can make a donation through Online Banking to: **'Devon County Association for the Blind'**
Sort Code: 30-80-37 Account Number: 62326768

Leave us a gift in your Will

Ask for a copy of our **Ultimate Guide to Leaving a Lasting Legacy to Charity**. This is designed to give an overview of the importance of making a will, a will writing check-list and how legacies have supported our work.

To support Devon in Sight with a donation please ring...

Helpline 01392 876 666

The Helpline is open between 10am and 2pm Monday to Friday

VI Social Clubs Directory

There are many local social clubs across Devon for people with sight loss

Having sight loss doesn't have to mean sitting at home on your own. There are many Social Clubs for Visually Impaired People across Devon where people can come together and enjoy each other's company.

Most club meetings have some entertainment and the occasional outing. However, many of our clients tell us that the real attraction is just the opportunity to get out of the house, sit and talk with others, share a joke and a coffee and feel safe in the knowledge that they are among friends.

As reported in the news section many clubs are keen for new members and to attract volunteers. Why not give your local club a go?

East Devon Clubs

Exeter Society for the Blind

Contact: Ann Cheney **Tel:** 01392 439 765
Meetings: Last Friday of the Month at 2.30pm
Venue: Methodist Church, Fore Street, Exeter.

Exeter Macular Group

Contact: Jo Fishwick **Tel:** 07947 373 244
Meetings: Last Tuesday of the Month at 10.30am
Venue: The Mint, Fore Street, Exeter, EX4 3AT

Exmouth Macular Group

Contact: Tina Caswell **Tel:** 01395 222 247
Meetings: First Tuesday of the Month at 10.30am
Venue: RAFA Club, Wings Bar, 33/35 Imperial Road, Exmouth, EX8 1DB

Mid Devon Clubs

Crediton Club

Contact: Margaret Trout **Tel:** 01363 774 318
Meeting: First Monday of the Month at 2pm
Venue: Crediton Inn, 28a Mill St, Crediton.

North Devon and Torridge Clubs

Barnstaple Macular Group

Contact: Diana Piper **Tel:** 01271 864 285
Meeting: Fourth Tuesday of the month at 10:15
Venue: Queens Theatre, Boutport Street.

Bideford & Torridge Macular Group

Contact: Richard Lockward **Tel:** 01237 476 827
Meetings: First Thursday of the month 10am
Venue: Burton Art Gallery, Kingsley Road.

Bude & Holsworthy Macular Group

Contact: David Goulding **Tel:** 01409 211 401
Meeting: Second Tuesday of the month at 2pm
Venue: Holsworthy Memorial Hall, Manor Car Park, North Rd, Holsworthy, EX22 6DJ

Torridge Friendship and VIP Group

Contact: Susan Uttley **Tel:** 01237 470 696
Meetings: Second Tuesday of the month at 2pm
Venue: Sea Scouts Hall, Park Lane, Bideford.

Plymouth, South Hams & Teignbridge Clubs

Dartmouth Caring

Contact: Celia Stevens **Tel:** 01803 835 384
Meeting: First Thursday of the month
Venue: Clifton Room, The Guildhall, Victoria Road
Dartmouth, Devon TQ6 9RY

Newton Abbot Care for the Blind Society

Contact: Janet Williams **Tel:** 01626 211 914
Meetings: First & Third Tuesday
Venue: No Limits Café 3, Bridge House,
Sherborne Rd, Newton Abbot TQ12 2QX

Plymouth Macular Group

Contact: Jo Fishwick **Tel:** 07947 373244
Meetings: First Wednesday of the month at 1.45pm
Venue: Lower Hall of Abbey Hall, Behind St.
Andrews Church, Plymouth PL1 2AD

Plympton Macular Group

Contact: Jo Fishwick **Tel:** 07947 373 244
Meetings: To be confirmed.

Teignmouth Macular Group

Contact: Peter Taylor **Tel:** 07990 787 099
Meetings: First Wednesday of the month at 10am
Venue: Teignmouth Rugby club, Bitton Park
Road, Teignmouth, TQ14 9DQ

Torbay Clubs

Torbay Social Club for the Blind and Visually Impaired

Contact: Graham Leach **Tel:** 01803 209 574
Meetings: Second & Fourth Wednesday of the
month
Venue: Preston Conservative Club, 299 Torquay
Road, Paignton TQ3 2EY

VisualEyes Brixham

Contact: Chris Sumner **Tel:** 01803 853 959
Meeting: First Monday of the month at 2pm
Venue: United Reform Church, New Road,
Brixham TQ5 8NE

VisualEyes Paignton

Contact: Chris Sumner **Tel:** 01803 853 959
Meeting: First Wednesday of the month at 10.30am
Venue: Paignton Library, Great Western Road,
Paignton TQ4 5AG.

West Devon Clubs

Tavistock Macular Group

Contact: Jo Fishwick **Tel:** 07947 373 244
Meetings: Second Thursday of the month at 2.30pm
Venue: Anchorage Centre, Chapel Street,
Tavistock, PL19 8AG.

For help locating your local VI Social Club please ring...

Helpline 01392 876 666

The Helpline is open between 10am and 2pm Monday to Friday

Talking Newspapers & Magazines

Being able to see the printed word is something a lot of us take for granted. Blind and partially sighted people don't have this opportunity. Talking Newspapers are available in many areas of Devon keeping people in touch.

Last year Haydn Thomas, the Chair of The Sid Vale and East Devon Talking Newspaper Association summed up how Devon in Sight promotes and supports many Talking Newspapers across Devon.

Mr Thomas said, "For the Visual Impairment sector to work, partnerships are essential. As a small charity, we provide a weekly news service for visually impaired adults across East Devon. Our essential service would be impossible without the support of Devon in Sight who not only make referrals to us, but also provide us with professional expertise, advice and guidance."

Many Talking Newspapers are able to provide subscribers with a FREE USB speaker so you can listen to the recordings. These are easy to operate and don't take up much space in your home.

Talking Newspaper Directory 2023

Crediton Talking Newspaper

Contact: Eric Parkes Tel: 01363 828 78

Dawlish and Teignmouth Talking Newspaper (Hear and Now)

Contact: Valerie Forrester Tel: 01626 866 640



"Our essential service would be impossible without the support of Devon in Sight."

Teignbridge Talking Newspaper (Dyrons Journal)

Email: lenandmary2000@yahoo.co.uk

Website: www.dyronsjournal.co.uk

Exeter District Talking Newspaper (Iscatape)

Contact: Tim Harlow Tel: 0779 356 0753

Exmouth Talking Newspaper

Contact: Gill Laws Tel: 01395 266 968

Mid Devon Messenger

Contact: Helen McIntosh Tel: 01884 855 464

North Devon Talking Newspaper

Contact: Andy Shiner Tel: 01271 373 180

Plymouth and West Devon Talking Newspaper

Contact: John Harris Tel: 01822 613 611

Sid Vale Talking Newspaper

Contact: Wendy Eagles Tel: 01395 516 060

South Hams Talking Newspaper

Contact: David Stone Tel: 01548 580 164

Torrige Talking Newspaper

Contact: Shirley Law Tel: 01271 861 032

Our Directory of Talking Newspapers and Magazines can be found on the Devon in Sight website under information at...

www.devoninsight.org.uk

Articles for the Blind

Return Address: Devon in Sight
Splatford Barton, Splatford, Kennford
Exeter, EX6 7XY



Devon in Sight
Your local sight loss charity

01392 876 666

enquiries@devoninsight.org.uk
www.devoninsight.org.uk

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

Registered Charity No. 1140978. Devon in Sight is the working name of Devon County Association for the Blind, a Company Limited by Guarantee. Company Registration No. 07371472