Devon in Sight
Your local sight loss charity

Celebrating 99 Years 1925 - 2024

In Vision

The magazine of Devon in Sight

Summer 2024 Issue 39



Our ‘Sensory Garden Experience’ takes Gold at the Devon County Show!

Summer 2024 - Issue 39

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Devon in Sight is a Member of **the Helpline Partnership**

Helpline 01392 876 666

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

Chief Executive Officer's

Welcome



It was very flattering, if a little daunting, to receive an invitation from the Devon Agricultural Association to create a Sensory Garden Experience as the centre point of the 2024 Devon County Show.

I successfully pitched our ideas and received the commission in January 2024. The garden was the culmination of many months work during evenings and weekends, and a collaborative effort by some tremendously kind people who supported my vision with their sponsorship and skills.

The day before the show opened, I heard the rather uncomfortable news that our garden was going to be judged alongside the pros! Nobody had told us that! We hastily spent ages hiding plant labels, covering plastic plant pots with moss and tweaking. On the morning of the show we were invited to leave the garden whilst the judges walked slowly around the garden on three separate occasions. It was all rather tense.

It came as a huge surprise when just before our patron Lady Diana Devon opened the show garden, I was taken aside and quietly awarded the **Feature Garden Large Gold Medal** for our efforts. You can read the story from concept to execution later in the magazine.

Happy Days!

Grahame Flynn
Chief Executive Officer

Local News

'It was great to see such an array of educational and vocational options available for students'.

VisualEyes Torbay Closure

In January we heard through the grapevine that the Torbay charity **VisualEyes Torbay** had been dissolved.

VisualEyes Torbay, formally known as Brixham Blind Club worked throughout Torbay with people living with sight loss to improve their quality of day to day life through good companionship, friendship, signposting and adventure.

We understand that difficulties with volunteer recruitment were the main reason for this decision.

We continue to hold a Directory of Social Clubs for the Visually Impaired across Devon and hope that any new groups that emerge will give us their details to add to our directory.

Combe Pafford School Visit

On Tuesday 21st May, Mandy Darling our Community Engagement Officer, her Guide Dog Pepsi and Support Worker India Luther had an inspiring visit to Combe Pafford, a school that supports those with moderate learning, sensory and physical disabilities in Torquay.

Mike Lock OBE, the Head Master of this learning establishment for 30 years, covered the vast array of disabilities supported, including visual impairment, and Mandy was able to share information about the work of Devon in Sight.

Mandy said, "It was great to see such an array of educational and vocational options available for the students including hairdressing, bricklaying, engineering, horticulture, animal welfare and carpentry.

Building on the strength of the individual to culminate in a positive career choice and employment opportunities.

The school works closely with partners to support work experience placements to build confidence in students before they transition into the workplace.



Students are also encouraged to do traditional qualifications, but the combination of GCSE's and vocational training qualifications ensures more positive outcomes and enhanced life chances.

It is no surprise that Combe Pafford is three times oversubscribed and has attendance rates over 80%.

I was able to provide information on Devon in Sight services to support their visually impaired students and how Devon in Sight is on hand should they require advice and guidance."

Community Engagement Feature

Devon County Show 2024

'A key theme of the 2024 Devon County Show was inclusivity and accessibility.'

The Devon County Show is an agricultural show held annually from Thursday to Saturday in the third week of May at the Westpoint Arena and Showground in Clyst St Mary near Exeter. The Devon County Show is the largest annual event in Devon.

Each year, the Devon County Show welcomes well over a thousand visitors with accessibility issues through its gates and this number is increasing year on year. Recognising the importance of creating an inclusive experience for all, Show Manager, Lisa Moore announced the introduction of several new initiatives for the 2024 Show. These have come about as a result of a site audit carried out at the 2023 Show by Chloe Hammond, a wheelchair user, and her assistance dog, Ocho. **A key theme of the 2024 Devon County Show was inclusivity and accessibility.**

It was therefore a huge honour to be approached to provide a **Sensory Garden Experience** for this year's show in the prestigious Crafts & Horticulture Marquee. This is the biggest marquee on the showground, equivalent to the size of a football pitch. The Crafts & Horticulture Marquee is home to a number of trade stands, garden installations and also hosts baking competitions and food demonstrations. It is thus a hive of activity and an immensely popular area of the showground.

There is no event larger in Devon where we could raise awareness of our work with such a wide audience. This was an opportunity not to be missed!



Our CEO Grahame Flynn constructed a 1:20th scale model of the garden for the first meeting with Devon County Show PR Officer Heloise D'Souza. There is no better way to share a vision. The meeting was very encouraging with more and more County Show Executives joining the discussion as word spread. We were delighted to be commissioned to create the show garden.

Work on the show garden commenced in January 2024. It became apparent at an early stage that for ease of construction and to make the planting accessible the garden would be modular and made of large planters. Standard planters were modified and ranged in height from 60cm to 120cm. These made them wheelchair accessible and added interest with different levels. We were also going to need some help from local business to realise the vision.

Grahame's husband Stuart Barker has been a member of the Royal Horticultural Society for decades and his gardens have been open to the public under the National Garden Scheme. He worked with Mrs Tammy Falloon, Managing Director of **St. Bridget Nurseries** to curate the planting. Stuart explained, "The plants in the garden were selected to represent colour, form, texture, sound and scent. In the interests of health and safety we didn't encourage the public to eat any of the plants!"

2024 Devon County Show
16 • 17 • 18 MAY

Devon in Sight
aims to
'make Devon
a Sight Loss
Friendly County'

There are
51,000 people
living with
sight loss in
Devon.

Main Entrance

A huge **steel archway** marked the entrance to the garden. Passing through an arch is symbolic of the opening of new perspectives and the ability to see beyond the present.

It was designed and constructed by father and son Tim and Oliver Bramston of **Iron in the Blood Blacksmiths of North Tawton.** It was festooned with fairy lights and draped with a sample of the longest knitted bunting in the world.



1st Planter

Having passed through the entrance arch visitors were met with the first of six planters. This was filled with herbs and scented leaf plants which people were encouraged to touch and smell.

Benches

At the first of three wooden garden benches people were encouraged to try on Simulation Spectacles. These glasses simulate the typical effects of the most common causes of visual impairments; an exercise designed to build empathy and understanding with those with sight loss.



2nd Planter

A Water Feature dominated the next planter. The simple design allowed the water to cascade down a textured sphere into a bowl below. This was surrounded with woodland plants such as ferns, hostas, and heuchera.

3rd Planter

The tallest planter included a range of colourful mid-season flowers, brightly coloured flowering shrubs, grasses and low growing perennials of different heights. The highlight for many was the heavily scented Lilac and Azaleas.



4th Planter

Making the garden attractive to young people was always going to be a challenge. Our Sensory Planter featured a large column of water, illuminated from within. Visitors were encouraged to press a button to generate bubbles and animate little model fish and other marine life.

Sensory lighting stimulates the senses with bright lights and colours. This can help young brains process information better, improving focus, communication, and social skills.



This planter was made possible by the kind support of **In Focus** (Formerly WESC Foundation). In Focus Staff Nikki Cunliffe, Sue Serret, Harry Evans and Kate Mather were present during the show to talk about working with children and young people with sight loss.

A second garden bench gave the public the opportunity to meet one of our **Sight Loss Ambassadors** who shared their stories of living with sight loss with the public. We would particularly like to thank Mark Harper, Geoff Mann, Mandy and Steve Darling with their Guide Dogs Pepsi and Jennie!



Sensory Shed

Dominating the back corner of the garden was a sensory shed inspired by the sentry box used by Lionel Jeffries as Caractacus Potts in the classic 1968 musical fantasy film 'Chitty Chitty Bang Bang'. This was kindly constructed by John and Jaqueline Shields of **Shields Buildings of North Tawton.**

The shed was decorated with union jack pendants, a flag pole, sunflower curtains and a wind chime!



Within the shed visitors were invited to explore several brightly coloured bon bon jars contained mystery smells such as Rose, Vanilla, Bubble Gum, Christmas Tree, Lemon Sherbet, and Sandalwood.

Visitors were invited to gently rub the leaves of Scented Pelargoniums hung from the walls between their thumb and forefinger and smell their fingers. Many detected the scent of Orange, Nutmeg or Spice.



Floristry Display

Devon in Sight Trustee Marilyn Minter-Newson created a magnificent floristry display with sunflowers at the heart of the design in recognition of the Hidden Disability Sunflower.

Many people live with a hidden disability or condition. Wearing a Hidden Disability Sunflower lanyard lets people know that you may need a helping hand, understanding, or more time in shops, at work, on transport, or in public spaces.

Continuing with the sunflower motif all the staff, volunteers and sponsors were invited to wear straw hats with sunflower decoration.



Worzel Gummidge

Building on the agricultural theme Grahame was keen to include a tribute to his late friend the actor Jon Pertwee as the centre piece of the third bench. You may remember Jon's character Worzel Hedgerow Gummidge, the scarecrow from the classic family series Worzel Gummidge which started in 1979. Together with talented sculptor Phillip T Robinson, Grahame created a lifesize Worzel display using the original cast of Jon Pertwee's face taken by legendary make-up designer Christopher Tucker in 1979.



Worzel proved a great draw for people who wanted a selfie and was the catalyst to many conversations around how sight loss affects family members. Signage with Worzel reminded the public of the importance of regular visits to opticians.

Light Cube

A large, illuminated cube was situated at the heart of the garden. Each panel had a simple message or quote about sight loss and our services. This cycled through a range of colours and was planted with vibrantly coloured Begonia and trailing ivy.



6th Planter

The last planter was designed to be bright and bold. This was achieved with a combination of shrubs and perennials with highly decorative foliage and the brightest of seasonal flower.

Soundscape

To add to the sensory experience Grahame created a soundscape for the garden using sound effects from the BBC Sound Effects Library. This included sounds associated with the countryside, seaside, running water, church bells and a cricket match. It was punctuated with the odd neighing horse, a cockerel and a WW2 Spitfire flying overhead. This became a source of huge amusement for the staff team watching the public suddenly look around the tent for a loose horse!



Gazebo

Having visited the garden the public could speak with Devon in Sight staff in our Gazebo staffed by Jennie Benham, Louise Millington and Mandy Darling. We received a huge number of enquiries and many people signed up for our Jump for Sight Challenge. We also sold some tactile paintings by blind artist Barry Goodfellow who also joined us on day one.

The Sensory Garden Experience would not have been possible without the following: Mr Stuart Barker, The BBC Sound Effects Library, Devon County Agricultural Association, Iron in the Blood, In Focus, Lady Diana Devon, Lakeway Ecological Consultancy Ltd., Marilyn Minter-Newson, See the Future, Shields Buildings, Stalite Signs, St. Bridget Nurseries, Mrs Ann Wilson and the Devon in Sight Team.

Torbay Living Well with Sight Loss Event

'Bringing together our partners across the Sight Loss Sector in your community.'



◀ Photo Credit: Jennie Benham (Devon in Sight)

▲ Grahame Flynn, Cllr. Mark Spacagna and Mandy Darling

Tessa Barrett, Head of Services reminds us, "Blind and partially sighted people often feel isolated and digitally excluded. Devon in Sight provides Living Well with Sight Loss Events in partnership with Sight and Sound Technology the UK's leading provider of equipment, software and services for people who are blind and partially sighted.

Our Torbay Event took place on Thursday 9 May 2024 at Jasmyn House, Paignton. This day was run in partnership with Torbay Sensory Team and Torbay Social Club for the Blind and Visually Impaired.

Exhibitors included Blind Veteran's UK, Community Energy Torbay (ECOE), Devon in Sight, the Eye Clinic Liaison Officer for Torbay, The Lions Club of Paignton, Living Options Devon, The Out and About VI Group, RNIB Community Connect, Sensory Team Torbay, Sight and Sound Technology and Torbay Social Club for the Blind and Visually Impaired."

Councillor Mark Spacagna, the Mayor of Torbay joined us at the event and pledged to 'Jump for Sight' our tandem sky dive scheduled for Saturday 5th July, 2025.

Mark said, "This event made me very aware of the difficulties those living with little or no sight come across on a daily basis and the equipment and services that are available to help and maintain independence. Personally, I want to support the work Devon in Sight does to help those living with these challenges maintain their independence. I challenge anyone to come and join me in this amazing, once in a lifetime event."

Our Living Well with Sight Loss Events this year are supported by the Tesco Community Grant Scheme. These grants support thousands of local community projects and good causes across the United Kingdom. Further Events are taking place in Tavistock (30 May), Westward Ho! (13 June) and Plymouth (20 June).

Registered clients of Devon in Sight will receive an invitation letter automatically, however, anyone affected by sight loss can register through the Helpline.

For information about future **Living Well with Sight Loss Events:**

Sight Loss Helpline 01392 876 666

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

Introducing Devon Carers

'You can access Devon Carers if you provide unpaid support for an adult living in Devon (excluding Plymouth and Torbay)'

On 13th February, Devon in Sight's Chief Executive Officer, Grahame Flynn welcomed Hayley Buscombe, Devon Carers' Community Engagement Lead to our monthly telephone-based Sight Loss Speaker Event.

Hayley told us that Devon Carers, a service provided by charity Westbank Community Health and Care, are one of the largest such services in the country with more than 30,000 people registered with them. They are currently celebrating 25 years of supporting unpaid carers in Devon. The service is commissioned by Devon County Council and NHS Devon.

You can access their free service if you provide unpaid support for an adult living in Devon (excluding Plymouth and Torbay) who needs help because they are ill, frail, have a disability, mental health concerns or experiencing addiction.

Hayley explained that you don't have to be providing full-time daily personal care; it may be collecting their shopping, popping in to make sure they are okay, or providing emotional support. She highlighted how, for many people, it can take a long time to realise they are unpaid carers and even longer to accept this role in their everyday lives, but support from an early stage makes an enormous difference.

Some of the tips that Hayley shared are:

- Contact organisations, like Devon Carers, for help in good time – don't leave it until you have a crisis!

- Ask for and accept help from friends, family and neighbours, and be clear about what you want them to do.

- Look for and take breaks at every opportunity – you may like to join one of Devon Carers' Peer Support Groups, attend their Carers' Skills Workshops or just have a good soak in the bath, whilst a friend or neighbour sits with the person you support.

- Notice when things go well, the little successes. If something didn't work, note this and try something else.

Whether you are new to caring or are a long way through your journey, contact Devon Carers for:

- Information
- Advice
- Support
- A Carers Assessment
- Carer Skills Workshops
- Peer Support Groups
- Carers Passport
- Quarterly magazine
- Emergency planning forms
- Hospital Services
- Carers Break Fund

They can also provide versions of any of their information in large print if required.

For further information please contact **Devon Carers** on:

Helpline 03456 434 435

Monday – Friday 8am-6pm and Saturday 9am-1pm.

Are Air Fryers the new way to cook?

‘Air-fryers have become a game-changing gadget for many.’

A recent topic of conversation in our weekly Chit-Chat Calls has been the benefits of air-fryers particularly during the ‘cost of living crisis’.



Why have Air-fryers become a game-changing gadget for many?

Air-fryers cook food more quickly and *can* be cheaper to run. Many have dual drawers to enable cooking separate items. Some have a fan that can be noisy during use. They use very little oil, and this is beneficial for your health. Most air-fryers can perform multiple functions, you can bake, roast, dehydrate and grill in most models.

What are the benefits of getting an air fryer?

The primary benefit of an air-fryer is the convenience they offer. Like any kitchen gadget you want something that is going to make life simpler and there is no doubt an air fryer does.

The Verdict: Are air-fryers worth it?

Air-fryers *are* convenient! Think of air-fryers as mini ovens that can tackle almost anything you’d put in a conventional oven or deep-fat fryer.

They are typically more compact than traditional ovens, they also heat up and circulate hot air more efficiently around food – resulting in meals cooked faster.

Cobalt Systems Limited have manufactured specifically for sight impaired people a talking air-fryer for **£99.95.**

Cobalt says their air-fryer “has all the advantages of air-frying made available with the inclusion of speech. They provide a fast and energy efficient way of cooking. Their model has a 4-litre capacity and is simple to operate, has raised tactile touch sensitive buttons. Cooking times can be set manually between 80 to 200 degrees and 1 to 6 mins cooking time or with 5 handy preset categories.

The air-fryer will announce ‘rearrange the food’ halfway through the cooking cycle. It also has a spoken countdown timer. For safety once complete the air-fryer will announce ‘fryer temperature high; every 20 seconds for 2 minutes.

All functions are spoken in a clear, male voice. For ease of cleaning, it has a detachable pan that is dishwasher safe for easy cleaning.”

Source: BBC Good Food Website & Cobalt Systems Limited.

For more information about the **Cobalt Speech Air-Fryer** call:

Cobolt 01493 700 172

www.cobolt.co.uk/products/talking-air-fryer

Health and Wellbeing Service Feature

Speaker Seminars Summer 2024

Devon in Sight's Telephone-based Sight Loss Seminars are an opportunity for you to hear from our partners across the Health and Social Care and Voluntary sectors, in the comfort of your own home.

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 11 June 2024

'Bringing Water to Life'

There is a Slovakian Proverb which says,"Pure water is the world's first and foremost medicine."

South West Water look after the water and wastewater services for 1.8 million customers across Cornwall, Devon, the Isles of Scilly and parts of Dorset and Somerset. From treatment and maintenance to innovation and improvements, they're busy every day finding and fixing leaks, unblocking sewers and going bigger and further in their environmental work.

Our Guest Speaker is **Lorraine Whiting,** Community and Customer Liaison Co-ordinator, **South West Water.**

Tuesday 9 July 2024

'Making Rail Accessible'

Great Western Railway (GWR) offers a range of services to make the railway more accessible for individuals and groups by increasing their confidence in rail travel. We are delighted to be raising awareness of Passenger Assist, Try a Train, the Devon Access Wallet Scheme, and the new Travel Sensory Packs.

Our Guest Speaker is **Robin Owen, Accessibility Mentor, Great Western Railway.**



▲ Robin Owen

Tuesday 13 August 2024

'Ask the Devon in Sight Team'

This month we will be having an open forum with the staff of Devon in Sight.

Please submit your questions to the Helpline by 31 July 2024.

This session will be hosted by **Grahame Flynn,** Chief Executive Officer, **Devon in Sight.**



▲ Grahame Flynn

To access **Telephone Sight Loss Speaker Seminars** ring:

Tel: 0808 169 79 30

Calls from your home telephone or mobile are FREE

Health and Wellbeing Service Feature

Have you tried our Chit-Chat Calls?

"The calls are helpful, informative and supportive."



Tessa Barrett, Devon in Sight's Head of Services reminds us, "Being told you are losing your sight can be difficult to come to terms with, with common effects being depression and reduced wellbeing.

People living with little or no sight can feel cut off from the people and things around them. This is compounded by inaccessible information, difficulty with everyday tasks such as shopping for groceries and problems navigating pavements or using public transport.

Our **FREE Weekly Telephone Chit-Chat Calls** are your opportunity to air your thoughts, concerns, ideas and to share your lived experience of sight loss in a safe space. All calls are moderated by an experienced member of the Devon in Sight Team.

Sharing tips for living with little or no sight and speaking with other people on the same journey as you can be hugely beneficial.

Callers often share the challenges of accessing transport, Health and Social Care and using Assistive Technology such as mobiles and tablets".

David Gaily, who is Severely Visually Impaired and a regular caller said, "Chit-Chat Calls allow us to get together with other people who are visually impaired who all have a variety of sight loss conditions at different stages. The calls are helpful, informative and supporting."

Mark Harper who is also Severely Visually Impaired said, "It's good for the younger generation to join the call and speak with older people who share their experience and knowledge to support you to understand what the future could be."

Sylvia Jenkins said, "It's good to know, you are not alone."

Chit-Chat Calls are open to anyone who is living with sight loss or supporting someone with sight loss. You can remain silent or introduce yourself to everyone on your first call.

Why don't you give our Chit-Chat Call Service a go?

To access the FREE Wednesday morning **Chit-Chat Call** call:

Tel: 0808 169 79 30

Calls start at 10.30am and are **FREE from mobiles and landlines**

Sight Loss and Diabetes

'The risk of eye problems is the same whatever type of diabetes a person has been diagnosed with.'

The following article has been written by Adrian Sanders a Diabetes Advocate.

"My Mother lost her sight due to Type 1 Diabetes (T1D) a year before she died. She suffered from Glaucoma, a common complication for people with Type 1 or Type 2 diabetes. Like my late mother I suffer from T1D, the less common and some say more severe of the two main types of diabetes, but **the risk of eye problems is the same whatever type of diabetes a person has been diagnosed with.**

Only around 1 in every 10 people with diabetes have T1D that cannot be prevented and those with it must inject insulin several times a day while keeping constant vigilance on food intake and energy exertion.

To some degree Type 2 Diabetes (T2D) can be avoided, but a healthy lifestyle is no guarantee that a diagnosis won't occur at some point, and it can in some cases be put into remission if diagnosed early and action taken, but it is only remission. Sadly, many people with diabetes, particularly T2D, face stigma as people mistakenly think the condition is self-inflicted and associated with obesity. If you consider it, who controlled your diet and introduced you to the wrong foods and sugar addictions when you were a child? Who put the temptation in your path through advertising, placement in supermarket shelves and at checkouts, and of course convenience and price once you were old enough to make choices?

The overall numbers of people with diabetes continues to grow with an estimated 4.3 million people in the UK alone, and around up to another million undiagnosed.

It has been estimated that if all the people with diabetes were in one country, it would be the third most populated in the world. For someone with diabetes, failure to stick to a treatment regime can result in numerous eye problems, many of which are complications of diabetes.

Diabetic Macular Edema (DME) is a complication of diabetic retinopathy where fluid leaks into the macula, the central part of the retina responsible for sharp, central vision. This causes swelling and can lead to vision distortion or loss.

People with diabetes are at a higher risk of developing cataracts, a clouding of the eye's natural lens. Cataracts can cause blurred vision and, if left untreated, can lead to significant vision impairment. Diabetes increases the risk of developing glaucoma, a group of eye conditions that damage the optic nerve, often due to increased pressure within the eye. Without treatment, glaucoma can lead to irreversible vision loss. Retinopathy is most commonly associated with diabetes, but can also occur due to other factors such as hypertension, high cholesterol levels, or other diseases affecting blood vessels. To prevent retinopathy the control of blood sugar levels is essential.

The importance of early diagnosis of diabetes cannot be stressed enough, so if you have any of the symptoms associated with diabetes, going for a wee a lot, especially at night, excessive thirst, feeling more tired than usual, unexpected weight loss, genital itching or thrush, cuts and wounds taking longer to heal, blurred eyesight or increased hunger, get checked straight away at a pharmacy or your GP."

New Clinical Trails Available

'Staff at the Retina Clinic London have a passion for bringing the most innovative treatments to patients in the form of clinical trials'

The Retina Clinic London is the UK'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 specialists in retinal diseases, Director Prof. Stanga is an expert in his field and has pioneered many diagnostic technologies, treatments, and clinical trials.

Prof. Stanga and his dedicated research team have a passion for bringing the most innovative treatments to patients in the form of clinical trials. They are keen to make patients aware that there is choice outside of teaching hospitals to access clinical trials. Many of you met the team at our conference last year.

Clinical trials can be an option when there are no approved treatments, such as "Dry" Age-related Macular Degeneration (AMD). Clinical trials also offer patients the chance to reduce the burden of their ongoing treatment, such as for "Wet" Age-related Macular Degeneration (AMD).

The Retina Clinic London are actively recruiting for a Gene Therapy clinical trial which aims to reduce the number of intravitreal Anti-VEGF injections required for treatment of Wet AMD every year.

Please do get in touch if you or someone you know meets the following criteria:

- Wet AMD diagnosed within the last 4 years
- Have already had cataract surgery in the eye(s) with Wet AMD
- Aged between 50 and 89

All current clinical trials are industry-sponsored and are therefore at no cost to patients.

Patients are reimbursed for travel and accommodation expenses (maximum reimbursement amounts are dependent on each clinical trial).

The Retina Clinic London Research Team are currently recruiting for several clinical trials in the following conditions:

- Wet Age-related Macular Degeneration (Wet AMD)
- Dry Age-related Macular Degeneration (Dry AMD) with Geographic Atrophy (GA)
- Vitreous Floaters and Opacities (VFO)

The Retina Clinic London will also be involved in clinical trials for the below conditions. If you suffer from these conditions, please do get in touch to be added to their database so you can be contacted.

- Usher Syndrome Type 1B with Retinitis Pigmentosa
- X-linked Retinitis Pigmentosa
- Stargardt's

Professor Stanga is Principal Investigator 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.

The Retina Clinic London's Clinical Trials Coordinators are keen to speak to anyone who thinks they may benefit from participating in one of their clinical trials.

For information about **Clinical Trials and Research** please call:

Sight Loss Helpline 01392 876 666

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

Colorectal Cancer – NHS Screening

'It is imperative that we encourage as many people as possible to complete the test. **Your next poo could save your life!'**



Devon in Sight has been asked by the NHS to raise awareness of Bowel Cancer as it has relaunched its Bowel Cancer Screening Campaign.

The campaign aims to encourage people aged 56 to 74 years and particularly people who are disabled who are sent the NHS bowel cancer screening home test kit to complete and return it and ultimately help catch bowel cancer early.

Bowel cancer is the fourth most common cancer in the UK and detecting it at the earliest stage makes you up to nine times more likely to be successfully treated. Yet almost one third of people who were sent an NHS bowel testing kit did not go on to complete it. The NHS says, "It is imperative that we encourage as many people as possible to complete the test."

To help everyone, the NHS has produced new resources that are available including standard, easy read, large print, braille and audio by typing this web address into your computer search engine **www.tinyurl.com/5dpcbuzc**

The NHS aims to get the results of your test to you within two weeks. If you have not received your results in this time, contact the Bowel Screening Helpline on 0800 707 60 60.

There are 2 types of result:

1. No further tests needed.
2. Further tests needed.

If you do not need a further test this means that you will be invited to do another screening test in 2 years (providing you are still under 75 years of age by then).

If you are contacted to say further tests are required, this is because:

- Blood was found in your poo sample.
- You do not necessarily have bowel cancer (the blood could be the result of something like piles) but you will be offered an appointment to discuss having a colonoscopy to look for the cause. A colonoscopy is where a thin tube with a camera inside is inserted gently into your bottom to look for signs of cancer.

It is known that 2 in 100 people are asked to have further tests.

Devon in Sight would encourage anyone who is invited to participate in the Bowel Cancer Screening Campaign to do so. Remember, your next poo could save your life!

To request a kit call the **NHS Bowel Cancer Screening Helpline:**

Tel: 0800 707 60 60

Source: NHS Bowel Cancer Screening Campaign.

Lived Experience Conference



▲ Photo Credit: Conference Aston, Birmingham

▲ Conference Aston, Birmingham

The Visual Impairment Charity Sector Partnership (VICSP) funded the first ever residential Lived Experience Leadership Conference at the Aston Conference Centre in Birmingham on 22 and 23 April 2024.

The Visual Impairment Charity Sector Partnership (VICSP) includes representation from Guide Dogs, RNIB, Thomas Pocklington Trust, Glaucoma UK and the Macular Society.

The conference targeted blind and partially sighted employees in the sight loss sector looking to develop their confidence as a future or existing leader.



This event brought together visually impaired leaders from all over the UK, representing both small and large charities to share experiences of leadership journeys.

Mandy Darling, Community Engagement and Fundraising Officer at Devon in Sight said,

“Peter Osbourne, Deputy CEO for Guide Dogs, and Clare Burgess, CEO Sight of Surrey, both spoke eloquently about their route to becoming leaders of their respective charities.

“This was an inspiring conference with great peer support. There was a real opportunity to meet the others living with a visual impairment across the sight loss charity sector.

I was inspired to share the work Devon in Sight is undertaking and it was a great place to be able to share and swap ideas. It was also a real opportunity to lobby the national charities to work more collaboratively with those county charities out in the community like Devon in Sight.”

Conference Aston

To learn more about the **influential work of Devon in Sight** visit:

www.devoninsight.org.uk

Influencing Change Feature

Pavement Parking in Devon

Greatest Hits Radio champions a ban on pavement parking in Torbay!

It was almost four years ago that Greatest Hits Radio in Torbay went for a walk with Mandy Darling to see the impact that pavement parking was having on her ability to get around.

Pavement parking is banned in Scotland and London, but the results of a consultation from 2020 into extending the powers across England have still not been published. Devon's blind and partially sighted community feels let down. Campaigners and councils say problems are getting worse and increasingly larger vehicles are damaging pavements.

Mandy who uses a guide dog said, "My guide dog will take me into a main road and around the vehicle, so I am basically walking into the path of oncoming traffic to manoeuvre around that parked vehicle. It is extremely dangerous."

Graham Leach, from the Torbay Social Club for the Blind and Visually Impaired said, "In recent years there's been a rise in the number of shared-use pavements. You've got bikes on the pavement, you've got these people on mobility scooters. I was waiting for a bus and they nearly knocked me over. Somebody bumped into me and said, 'I wish you would look where you are going' but they don't think I can't see very well."

Councillor Linda Taylor, Cornwall's Council Leader who speaks for the Local Government Association on this issue says the Government shouldn't ask people for their views and then refuse to publish the findings, adding, "I think it is really, really disappointing. The whole idea of having a consultation is importantly to listen to what your residents say and then the next important step is to act on that consultation, on those findings."

Grahame Flynn, Chief Executive Officer of Devon in Sight, said, "Any obstruction on the pavement is hard for anybody who's in a wheelchair or with a visual impairment or has young kids walking down the pavement keeping them safe.

Pavements are for pedestrians, not for cars. You could say that with those A-frames outside cafes too. I think the thing is, we've got to as a society start thinking about others. The person who abandons their car on the pavement outside their house needs to think about the family going to school, about the elderly person next door with a walker or with a walking stick."

Steve Darling, the former Leader of Torbay Council who uses a guide dog said, "I get really frustrated with other people who just don't put themselves in other people's shoes who may have disabilities and park for their own convenience without realising that they could be forcing either people with disabilities or mobility issues or mothers with a pram out into the road."

A Department for Transport spokesperson said, "Everyone should be able to navigate their streets without obstacles, and while local authorities already have powers to prohibit pavement parking through local regulation, we have consulted on further helping them take action."

When asked, when the results of the 2020 consultation will be published, the spokesperson said, "The response to this will be published in due course."

Source: Andrew Kay, Chief Reporter for Greatest Hits Radio

Will's Marathon Challenge

Our Community supporting people living with sight loss in Devon

In November last year, medical student Will Passmore experienced the loss of his beloved Grandfather Ray Doughty, a dedicated member of the Board of Trustees of Devon in Sight.

Ray had Age-Related Macular Degeneration, and he was a direct beneficiary of the work carried out by Devon in Sight. He also brought to our attention the amazing work of the Retina Clinic London, around clinical trials and research.



▲ Devon

◀ Photo Credit:

We were delighted to hear that Will was going to take part in his first Marathon in memory of Ray and to raise funds for the us.

On Sunday 14th April 2024 Will completed the Manchester Marathon in a magnificent 3 hours and 55 minutes. This was even more impressive when you think that he completed the marathon with a suspected stress fracture!

Will said, "Firstly, I would like to thank the support of Grahame and the Team at Devon in Sight. If it was not for their amazing work with my late grandfather, none of this would have been possible. Furthermore, I would like to thank everyone who has donated to this amazing cause. I am truly stunned.

Thankfully, the gruelling 26.2 miles is over and my body is slowly recovering, whilst still on my medical placements! Although, the question remains: what next? "

Devon in Sights Chief Executive Officer Grahame Flynn said, "Everyone at Devon in Sight is tremendously proud of Will and his Marathon Challenge in memory of our late friend Ray Doughty.

He has raised over £600 so far and we are delighted to hear that Will is enthusiastic to undertake another challenge. If you would like to acknowledge Will's outstanding achievement you can still make a donation"

Cheque Donation

Please make your cheque payable to 'Devon in Sight' and post it to: **Will's Marathon, Devon in Sight, Splatford Barton, Kennford, Exeter, EX6 7XY.**

Card Donation

Card donations can be made over the telephone by ringing the Helpline on **01392 876 666.**

JustGiving Online Donation

You can make an online donation through **https://bit.ly/48q8Cab**

To make a donation to **Will's Marathon Challenge** call:

Sight Loss Helpline 01392 876 666

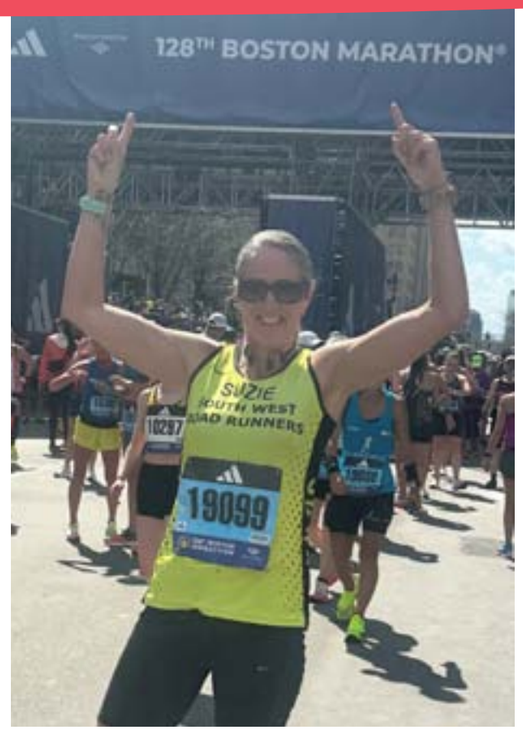
The Helpline is open between 10am and 2pm Monday to Friday

Charity of the Year 2024

Our Community supporting people living with sight loss in Devon

We were delighted to hear that our friends at Peter Tosh Opticians had chosen Devon in Sight to be their 'Charity of the Year'.

Optometrist Peter Tosh explained, "People with impaired sight will always hope that stronger glasses will make things better, sadly that is not always the case.



Devon in Sight enable us to give hope to such people by giving support beyond glasses, both physically and emotionally. By raising funds through donations for small repairs or adjustments, and sponsored challenges we can help Devon in Sight continue their invaluable work.

On Monday 15th April, Peter's wife Suzie was thrilled to complete the Boston Marathon, and in doing so helping to raise £250 for Devon in Sight.

The Boston Marathon is the world's oldest annual marathon and ranks as one of the world's best-known road racing events. Amateur and professional runners from all over the world compete in the Boston Marathon each year, braving the hilly Massachusetts terrain and varying weather to take part in the race.

The event attracts 500,000 spectators along the route, making it New England's most viewed sporting event. Starting with just 15 participants in 1897, the event has grown to an average of about 30,000 registered participants each year.

Taking taking part in it is considered a huge achievement in the running world. It can only be completed by runners who have managed to run a fast qualifying time in another marathon. It is a hilly marathon and this year was a very hot day, but Suzie managed to complete the run in a fantastic time.

Devon in Sight has had a long association with Pete Tosh Opticians in Topsham. We would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to Peter and Suzie for their fundraising support for our work. Suzie will be joining her husband, Pete, to run the Cardiff half marathon later in the year to help raise further funds for Devon in Sight and you can help by making donations at the practice or via this QR code.

Peter Tosh Opticians
FOCUSING ON YOU

www.petertoshopticians.co.uk

SCAN ME

To make an appointment at **Peter Tosh Opticians** call:

Tel: 01392 873 613

Peter Tosh Opticians, 21 High Street, Topsham, EX3 0ED

Supporting us

Friends of Devon in Sight

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



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 our vital work.

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

Everyone who joins our Regular Giving Scheme will receive a limited edition, **'I'm a Friend of Devon in Sight'** enamel badge.

Please ring the office to find out about joining.

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

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 call:

Sight Loss 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.**

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 Third Sector.

We have a unique **Assistive Technology Partnership** with **Sight and Sound Technology 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 Third Sector and Community Groups.

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 28 and 29.**

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 are pleased to hear your thoughts about how services across Devon can be improved.**

For more information about our services please ring:

Sight Loss Helpline 01392 876 666

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

Articles for the Blind

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



Devon in Sight
Your local sight loss charity

SCAN ME

Sight Loss Helpline 01392 876 666
enquiries@devoninsight.org.uk
www.devoninsight.org.uk

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

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