

N-Vision

The Blackpool, Fylde & Wyre Society for the Blind

Registered Charity Number: 1009955



Staff and volunteers having fun at the Christmas Fair

Newsletter

Spring 2016

N-Vision is a local independent charity providing services and support to anyone with reduced vision living in the Blackpool, Fylde and Wyre areas, regardless of age and means.

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Getting to Know the Trustees

As an organisation N-Vision is managed by a Board of Trustees and following the Annual General Meeting in October last year Clive Hirst was appointed Chair of the Board. Here you can find out a little more about Clive.



I spent the first 30 years of my working life teaching in secondary schools in deprived areas. I chose to work with disadvantaged children because this is where the need is greatest. The last few years of my teaching career were devoted to children with physical and mental health problems.

A career change enabled me to continue working for disadvantaged people in Blackpool's Voluntary Sector, managing projects on health, volunteering, computer recycling and business support. I became Patron of Blackpool Carers Centre after four years as Chair and am a Public Member of Spiral Health CIC. In 2006 I was the founding Chairman of Social Enterprise Solutions (UK) CIC. This business continues to support the growth of social enterprises including N-Vision. Working with Social Enterprise UK, I initiated the fast developing national Social Enterprise Places programme.

In 2009 I joined N-Vision as a member of the finance committee and was privileged to become Chairman in November 2015.

N-Vision is a precious asset for the people of Blackpool, Wyre and Fylde. It provides vital services for people with visual impairment and their carers, and assures us all that if our vision should fail we shall not be alone. In various legal forms, N-Vision has existed for 106 years. Along with the trustees, volunteers and staff I intend to keep N-Vision confident and strong. We operate in a changing and

challenging world where charities have to fight hard for decreasing funding. To thrive in this environment we must deliver high quality services in an efficient and business-like fashion. With my fellow Trustees and our capable and dedicated team, I shall work hard to keep N-Vision strong as we embark on our second century of service.

Clive Hirst B.Ed. Hons. FRSA

A message from Ruth Lambert, Chief Executive

For me, the beginning of a new year always creates a time for reflection and an air of expectation. It is now seven months since I started my job and during that time I have learned a great deal about the organisation, got to know the staff and volunteers and most importantly gained a greater awareness of the issues and needs of people with sight loss. My recent participation in the co-production of the Blackpool Joint Strategic Needs and Assets Assessment for Eye Health and Sight Loss provided the timely opportunity for me to learn of the wide range of inter-agency services and support available, recognise any strengths and gaps in provision and through consultation, identify a number of recommendations for future service development. Whilst we have to be realistic about the amount of funds available from all sources for such developments, it is in such straitened times that partnership and collaborative working can be the most effective way of making the best use of limited resources. I will keep you informed of any progress!

I am also looking forward to the rest of the year and my 'To Do' list gets longer every day. I am privileged to work for an organisation where quality and person centred care are the priorities. A number of the services provided by N-Vision have recently been cited as 'examples of best practice' and are models others strive to achieve. This established, shared, ethos provides a firm foundation upon which our own strategy and any future developments will be based. It's going to be a busy and productive year for all.

Focus on making the most of your vision

Friday, 4th March, 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

There are lots of products on the market that can help blind and partially sighted people make the most of remaining vision and therefore promote independence. There's always something new to find out about and this event will give you the opportunity to explore the latest products and technologies available.

Major suppliers Optelec, Sight and Sound and Synapptic will be here to show you what they have to offer. Of course our own Talking Newspaper will also be available and the Low Vision Centre will be open and the staff available to offer advice and discuss your needs.

So do call in and join us in the Sharples Hall, Bosworth Place, Blackpool, FY4 1SH, on Friday, 4th March between 10:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. Tea, coffee and biscuits will be available at a nominal charge.



Think Smarter About Technology

We're encouraging you to embrace new technology and Brian is our very own technology wizard. If you would like to make an appointment to come and see him in the Low Vision Centre he will take you through what is available step by step. Brian can show you the full range of technology including electronic readers, computer software which magnifies and talks, along with smartphones and tablets that are on display in the Centre permanently. So if reading your mail, e-mailing, skypeing family abroad or keeping up with friends on Facebook are your priorities, come and see Brian. You can make an appointment by ringing 01253 362696.

Technology Training

Introducing you to the various types of technology available is free but we are aware that when you have made the decision to purchase a Synapptic tablet or smartphone you may need guidance in how to use it. Brian is now registered as a Synapptic trainer and if you would like to have one to one tuition then we can offer this at a charge of £15.00 per half hour or £25.00 per hour. If you would like to explore our training opportunities then once again give Brian a call on 01253 362696



It's easy to find us – just follow the “Green Line”

We are always looking for ways to make life easier for blind and partially sighted people and we were very pleased when Blackpool Council agreed to our request to paint a navigational green line on the pavements all the way from the bus and tram stops at Starr Gate to the door of the Low Vision Centre. So for those of you with some useful vision that can pick up a bright colour this green directional line will be a great help and bring you right to our door.



Johnny following the green line

Macular Support Group

If you have macular degeneration, wet or dry, or any form of macular problems, why not come along and join our Macular Support Group which meets bi-monthly in the Sharples Hall, Bosworth Place, Blackpool FY4 1SH. The Support Group welcomes new members so if you would like to find out more about your condition and meet up with others who are experiencing similar difficulties just ring the Low Vision Centre on 01253 362696 for further details.

Activity Group and Knit and Natter Programme

All are welcome to join in with any of the activities that we run. The Knit and Natter Group which meets in the Sharples Hall from 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. costs £5.00 per session, which includes a soup and sandwich lunch. The trips start from the Sharples Hall and you need to be mobile enough to get on and off a coach. We do not provide sighted guides but are happy for you to bring a companion with you. The programme between now and Easter is as follows

Knit and Natter Dates: Wednesday, 24th February

Wednesday, 23rd March



Outings

Wednesday 9th March, Tour around the Lake District including a three course lunch at the Wild Boar Hotel, Crook and a visit to the Lakeland store. Cost £37.00 per person

To book for the trip please ring the Low Vision Centre on 01253 362696.

Café Clubs

Being based in South Shore we know that some of you find it difficult to visit us on a regular basis but do like to keep in touch with what's going on and to meet up with those experiencing sight loss who live in the same area as you. With this in mind, we have started a number of Café Clubs which meet on a monthly basis throughout the Fylde Coast area. These Clubs are based at easily reached venues in your local community and you will receive a warm welcome if you would like to join.

The Kirkham Café Club meets at the Silverdell Café from 10:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. on the 1st Tuesday of every month. The dates this Club will meet are 1st March, 5th April, 3rd May and 7th June.

The Cleveleys Café Club meets at The Tramway, 167-169 Victoria Road West, Thornton Cleveleys from 11:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon on the 2nd Tuesday of every month. Those attending might wish to stay on and have lunch at The Tramway, who serve a reasonably priced carvery. The dates this Club will meet are 8th March, 12th April, 10th May and 14th June.

The Fleetwood Café Club has had a change of venue and will now meet at the North Euston Hotel from 11:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon on the 3rd Tuesday of every month. The dates this Club will meet are 15th March, 19th April, 17th May and 21st June.

If you would like further information about the Café Clubs please call the Low Vision Centre on 01253 362696.



Members of the Kirkham Café Club

Blind Person's Tax Allowance

Find out how you might be entitled to reduce the amount of tax that you pay.



Most people have a personal tax allowance. This is the amount that you can earn before you start paying tax. Your personal allowance depends on your age and your taxable income.

If you are registered blind (severely sight impaired) then we recommend that you claim “Blind Person’s Allowance”. This will increase your personal allowance and therefore means that you could reduce the amount of tax you pay.

Unfortunately the “Blind Person’s Allowance” is not available to you if you are registered as partially sighted (sight impaired). You can transfer your allowance to your spouse or civil partner whether or not they are blind. If both of you are registered blind (severely sight impaired), you can each receive the allowance. You can backdate your claim, but there is a time limit for claiming tax back.

To make a claim or find out more, call the “VIPS” team at the Low Vision Centre on Tel 01253 362699.

Christmas Fair and Grand Draw

The support you give us for our Christmas Fair and the Grand Draw is tremendous and we do thank you. 2015’s Fair raised £2383.16 and the Grand Draw £1,155.00 giving us an overall total of £3538.16 all of which will go towards supporting the services we offer to those with reduced vision living within the local community.



Product of the month

We know many of you already understand the importance of lighting and what a difference a good task lamp can make when you're attempting to carry out any task from reading to cooking. A good lamp to try is the Daylight Twist portable lamp - DH277



This mains operated Daylight lamp is supplied with a 13 watt low-heat, energy saving daylight tube and comes with an easy-twist shade, so you can move the light into the perfect position each time. It is lightweight, compact, folds up neatly and is conveniently portable with its built-in handle. Use it as a reading lamp in your kitchen, light up your bedside table at night, or use anywhere around the home or office. This excellent energy saving lamp is on sale for £43.00.

To discuss your lighting needs and to see the full range of task lamps call in to the Low Vision Centre or give us a call on 01253 362696.

Did You Ever Serve in the Forces?

If you served in the Forces and have lost your sight in later life you may be eligible to become a member of Blind Veterans, the Charity who provide lifelong support for blind and partially sighted ex-service men and women.

If you would like further details of how to contact Blind Veterans please give the Low Vision Centre a call on 01253 362696.



Princess Alexandra Home

Those of you living in the community are used to the services offered through the Low Vision Centre and the Talking Newspaper but don't forget that we also have the Princess Alexandra Home.

The decision to give up your own home and move into permanent residential care is difficult but the Princess Alexandra Home can offer you accommodation in comfortable single bedrooms with en-suite facilities where you will be looked after by highly trained, caring staff.

The Home also offers rooms for short stays so if you are supported at home by family who may be going on holiday and worry about leaving you or if you have been ill and feel you would like a few days being looked after then this option might suit you.

We also have a number of self-contained, sheltered flats on site.

So whether it's a flat where you could live semi-independently, a short stay or finding out about full time residential care, the staff in the Princess Alexandra Home are happy to discuss your needs and answer any questions you might have, together with giving information about the costs involved. For further information or to make an appointment to view the Home call 01253 403091



Caregivers at Home

Are you finding everyday tasks such as cleaning, gardening and shopping more difficult? Or maybe you struggle to sort your paperwork. We provide a specialist support service to people in their own homes with staff trained to the highest standard and who are fully security cleared.

Rates are charged at £14.00 per hour but if you have two or more consecutive hours the price reduces to £13.00 per hour.

So if you are getting out of breath trying to get that quilt cover on or can't face that pile of laundry and the ironing that follows, call Elaine Wright, Care Services Manager on 01253 403091 to discuss how we can help.

All profits raised go to supporting our services.

Follow us on Social Media

Do you go on Facebook or Twitter? If you don't, we bet someone in your family does as social media is becoming an ever increasing part of daily life. Social media is the quickest way for us to get information out to you and for you to find out what's going on within N-Vision. So if you have the means look us up and "like us" or "follow us" and encourage your family members and friends to do the same.



N-Vision A Visionary Blind Society in the North West



@N_Vision_NW

If the thought of social media isn't your idea of fun and you want to steer well clear of it don't worry we are still happy to talk to you so you can always give us a ring and speak to a real person!

Volunteers

Without the support of our volunteers we couldn't offer the many services we do. Last year they gave over 13,400 hours to the Society and we thank them all for giving their time and skills so generously.

If you, or anyone you know, would be interested in finding out more about our volunteering opportunities then please ring Stephanie on 01253 362696.

Store Collections

Last year we raised £2,362.80 collecting at local supermarkets throughout Blackpool, Fylde and Wyre.

Already this year we have collected at three Aldi stores and we have the following booked:

Friday 18th March Booths St Annes

Saturday 19th March Booths St Annes

If you are in Booths on either of those dates then do please say hello to our volunteers who will be there between 9:30 a.m. and 5:30 p.m.

Whilst the main purpose of the store collections is to raise much needed funds it also offers us the opportunity to increase public awareness about N-Vision and the support it offers to local blind and partially sighted people and their families.

Our special thanks therefore go to the Stores involved and to all those who carry out the collections whilst also acting as ambassadors for the Society.



Barbara and Ruth, two of our volunteer collectors

Sponsored Walk 2016

These days there is so much emphasis on keeping fit. With this in mind what better way to do it with a target in mind by getting in training to participate in our Sponsored Walk.

This has become an annual fundraising event and last year we raised £2,083.16. We'll be walking from the Sharples Hall to Central Pier and back on Saturday, 16th July, so put the date in your diary and ask your family and friends if they'll take part.

The registration fee of £5.00 includes a hot drink and bacon sandwich, or vegetarian alternative, on returning to the Sharples Hall. If you would like a registration form give the Low Vision Centre a call on 01253 362696.



“£1 a month appeal”



Our £1.00 a month appeal is currently generating £304.00 per month from contributors who are donating between £1.00 and £30.00 per month. This is very much appreciated and contributes to the £1.3 million that it costs per year to provide N-Vision's services.

Do you have any family members or friends who would like to support our £1.00 a month appeal? If so please contact Patt Trow, Finance & Administration Manager, by email patt@nvision-nw.co.uk or by telephoning her on 01253 362688.

We will never contact those who donate to ask them to increase their contribution but we will send them a copy of each Newsletter so they are kept in touch with what N-Vision is doing and how the money is being spent.

N-Vision

BLACKPOOL, FYLDE AND WYRE SOCIETY FOR THE BLIND

Our services include:

- **Princess Alexandra Home – specialising in residential care for the visually impaired**
- **Low Vision Centre – providing help, support and guidance to increase independence and self-confidence**
- **Visual Awareness Training – increasing the understanding of the needs of the blind and those with reduced vision**
- **Eye Clinic Liaison Service – working closely with the medical team in the eye clinic and on the medical retina unit at Blackpool Victoria Hospital**
- **Talking Newspapers – keeping listeners up to date with what’s happening in the community**
- **Caregivers at Home – specialist home support to encourage independence and well being**
- **Visually Impaired Personalisation Support Brokerage Service (VIPS) – providing support through the process of applying for an assessment by the local social care team**
- **Charity Shop – selling good quality clothing, furniture, books and bric-a-brac**
- **Conference and Training Facilities – catering for large or small events with disabled access and free parking**
- **Support and Information Services – providing backroom services by the highly experienced administration team**

N-Vision supports over 2,500 beneficiaries of services who are living in the community and the charity relies on donations and fundraising to continue and develop this vital work.

N-Vision is the trading name of the Blackpool Fylde and Wyre Society for the Blind

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Princess Alexandra Home	01253 403091 dutyoffice@nvision-nw.co.uk
Charity Shop	01253 406848 charityshop@nvision-nw.co.uk
Caregivers	01253 403172 caregivers@nvision-nw.co.uk

Alternative Formats

This newsletter is also available in audio format through our Talking Newspaper Service or by email. Please call the Low Vision Centre to request your preference.

Recycle your Newsletter

Once you have read this newsletter please pass it on to a friend or family member, leave it at your GP's surgery, community centre or Church. Please don't throw it away. If you let one friend read it, we've doubled our readership to over 5,000.