



BucksVision
Visual Impairment Charity

**Winter
2024**

Newsletter



bucksvision



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Contents

We do hope that you look forward to receiving our newsletter and find the articles interesting. If you have any suggestions for improvements, please do let us know.

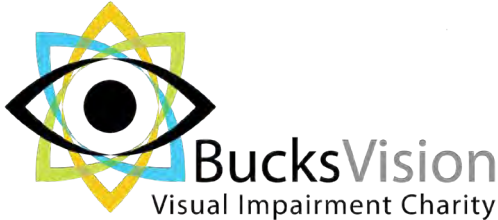
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Opening Hours

Monday - Friday: 9am - 5pm Phone Line: 9am - 4pm

Charity Registration No. 1147814



Welcome

Steve Naylor, Chief Executive

Welcome to our Winter newsletter.

As always, it contains a mixture of articles which we hope you will find interesting. If not, let us know, along with suggestions of what you would like to read.

As I write this, parts of the world are experiencing turbulent times and it can be difficult to stay positive with so many people suffering the consequences of human conflict.

In such times, it seems to me that being an active member of the local community is as important as ever. Many people make resolutions at the start of the New Year hoping to make a positive difference to their lives.

To my mind, one of the most positive things that you can do for yourself and for others is to volunteer with a local charity.

Volunteers are essential to the work of BucksVision. We are so lucky to have a team of brilliant volunteers supporting our work across Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes, but we would love to have even more.

If you, a friend, a family member, or colleague might have some time to volunteer with us, then please get in touch, we would love to hear from you.

To those of you who do volunteer with us, or who support our work in some other way, thank you so much. I know from the feedback we receive from our blind and partially sighted members that your efforts really are appreciated and that you really do make a positive difference.

Thank you for your continued support, we really do appreciate it.

Living Well with Sight Loss Courses 2024

BucksVision in partnership with Jan Foster from RNIB are delighted to have set dates for the 'Living Well with Sight Loss' courses in 2024. These courses are always very popular.

Scheduled for **Monday 18th** and **Tuesday 19th March**, this two-day course offers support and information to those experiencing sight loss, at a venue in High Wycombe, still to be confirmed.

Course Content

Understanding ECLO Services: Insights into the support provided by Eye Care Liaison Officers in hospitals.

Benefits, Registration, and Guide Dogs: Navigating the essentials of living with sight loss.

Daily Living and Mobility Solutions: Practical advice for independence and mobility from local sensory services.

Tech Advancements and Travel Concessions: Exploring the latest

in technology and understanding public transport benefits.

Charles Bonnet Syndrome: Understanding and coping with visual hallucinations associated with sight loss.

Wellbeing and Confidence Building: Strategies for maintaining mental health and taking those first steps towards regaining confidence.

Local Social and Activity Groups: Connecting with community resources and activities.

Setting Goals and Next Steps: Planning for the future with guidance from the RNIB and BucksVision.

Stay Tuned for Venue Confirmation and More
For more information and to stay updated on the course details, please contact us on **01296 487 556** or email **reception@bucksvision.co.uk**

Volunteering at BucksVision

Our volunteers are more than just helpers; they are the heartbeat of our charity.

Volunteers play a vital role in organising and running our social groups, adding joy and companionship to our members' lives. Our volunteers ensure that our members are not lonely and isolated at home.

As we continue to grow and reach more people, our need for passionate volunteers has never been greater. We are actively seeking volunteers.

Volunteer Drivers

Transport our members to social groups, offering them a chance to connect and share their experiences with others.

Social Group Helpers

Assist in setting up events, serving refreshments, and organising entertainment.

Befriending Volunteers

Spend time with our members in their homes or stay in touch using the telephone to provide companionship.





Social Media Volunteers

Help manage our social media platforms, spreading awareness of our work and engaging with our community online.

If you can spare an hour a week or more, your time can make a significant difference in someone's life.

Volunteering with BucksVision is not just about giving back; it's about being part of a community that supports local people who need our help.

Are you interested in joining our team of volunteers? We'd love to hear from you. Please contact us to learn more about these rewarding opportunities.

Your involvement, no matter in what capacity, can help make a real difference to the lives of local people who need our support.



For more information please contact us at volunteering@bucksvision.co.uk

Let's make the upcoming year even brighter for our community!

Office Refurbishment

We are thrilled to share the exciting news that we have received funding from The Screwfix Foundation to address some necessary repairs and enhancements in our office building located in Meadowcroft.

This support comes at an opportune time, allowing us to give our workspace a much-needed spruce up and create a more functional and welcoming environment for our members.

One of the immediate issues we'll be addressing is the repair of ceiling tiles that fell off during the recent heatwave. Safety is our top priority, so we will assess the extent of the damage and take the necessary steps to replace the tiles. Additionally, we plan to upgrade the lighting throughout the building, particularly with our visually impaired members in mind. This includes consulting with experts to choose suitable lighting solutions.

Our resource room, a vital space for our members, will also

undergo improvements. We intend to enhance storage to better organise and display our gadgets effectively. This will not only make the room more functional but also create a visually appealing space for our members.

As part of the overall spruce-up, we'll be conducting a thorough cleaning of the entire office space. We are considering repainting some areas to give the office a fresh and vibrant look.

Accessibility is a key consideration in our refurbishment plan. We want to ensure that the office is easily accessible to all our members, including those with mobility challenges.

We are immensely grateful for the support from The Screwfix Foundation, and we look forward to transforming our office space into a more functional, accessible, and aesthetically pleasing environment for all our members.



Don't let low vision slow you down

HumanWare's expanding range of Explore portable magnifiers will change the way you read wherever you are.



Explore 5 - £445, the perfect 'carry in your pocket' portable magnifier.



From reading TV listings to prices on menus, food packaging and medicine box details, you will find lots of uses for your Explore 5.

Explore 8 - £775 provides superb image quality. Two 21 megapixel cameras, one for close-up reading and the other for distance viewing.



With an 8" touchscreen, it is easy to use the on-screen pinch gesture or easy to find buttons to change to the level of magnification.

The new Explore 12 - £1495

Three-in-one portable magnifier with Free Writing Stand and Bag

Explore 12 is the exciting and easy to use full HD image quality magnifier with a 12 inch touchscreen for improved near and distance viewing.



You will be amazed how easy and intuitive writing becomes when using the Writing Stand.

The versatile Explore 12 will allow you to restart your hobbies and enjoy looking at family photographs again.

If you would like further information on any of our products, please call 0800 587 2589 or visit www.humanware.com

New Year Appeal

The New Year is a terrible time to suffer loneliness.

The New Year, for most, is a time of celebration and an opportunity to look forward to the year ahead. It can also be a very difficult time for people living with sight-loss.

One of the biggest challenges for those living with sight-loss is isolation. Often losing one's sight leads to a loss of confidence. Yet, it doesn't have to be that way. With the right support, people can learn new skills, regain their confidence, and continue to lead full and active lives.



Just £50

Can help pay for our resource centre which offers **one-to-one advice** on gadgets and aids to help a blind person with everyday tasks that sighted people often take for granted.

Just £100

Could contribute towards our **Experience Days** which consist of a variety of fun-filled days out specifically planned around the needs of those with sight-loss.

Just £250

Would fund one of our Befriending Volunteers to support a member with regular home visits for a whole year. BucksVision's **Home Support and Befriending** provides a range of services to help the visually impaired in their homes and is a real lifeline.

About Adrian

Adrian was only 30 years old when he was registered blind.

Adrian was a window maker and first noticed his eyesight deteriorating when he was looking for tools on his workbench.

“I’ve had to give up my livelihood. It’s been financially stressful and left me in a no man’s land worrying about finances.”

He went for an eye test which included a visual field test, which tests peripheral vision. Adrian didn’t even realise that the test had started as he couldn’t see any of the dots on the screen.

He was diagnosed with Retinitis Pigmentosa (RP), a genetic disorder of the eyes that causes loss of vision. Symptoms include trouble seeing at night and decreasing peripheral vision (side and upper or lower visual field). The hospital immediately registered him as severely sight impaired.

“It was a big shock. I had started bumping into things in 2021. At first, I just thought I was being a bit clumsy but eventually I knew something was wrong.”

Adrian’s biggest challenge has been coming to terms with his diagnosis and his future.

Following diagnosis Adrian was referred to Buckinghamshire Integrated Sensory Service (BISS) who provided practical support including how to use a white cane. Adrian has also started attending BucksVision’s Sunshine Club sessions which happen monthly in Aylesbury. It is a great way for local people living with sight-loss to come together for coffee and a catch up.

“Local charities like BucksVision are a real lifeline for people living with sight-loss. I would feel completely lost without the support and advice they have given me. My outlook on the future is much more positive”.

2024 Experience Days – Seeking Your Ideas!

2023 was filled with remarkable moments, largely due to our diverse range of Experience Days. We are looking forward to a fun filled calendar of events in 2024.

From the thrill of archery to the charm of steam trains, each event has offered something unique and memorable.



Our year culminated in a magical visit to Aylesbury Waterside Theatre for a festive showing of “Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs.”

A special highlight of our theatre trip was the Touch Tour organised before the show. This exclusive backstage experience allowed us to interact with the props and explore the stage, adding an enriching tactile dimension to our theatre visit. The staff at Waterside Theatre outdid themselves, providing detailed information and making the entire experience inclusive. This thoughtful addition enhanced our enjoyment of the Christmas Panto, making it a fitting and unforgettable end to our year of experiences.

As we look forward to 2024, we’re excited to plan the next series of Experience Days and we would love your input! Do you have ideas for engaging, inclusive events or locations that would be perfect for our calendar? We’re seeking suggestions for experiences that



can bring joy, and memorable moments to our community.

If you have any recommendations for must-visit spots or activities, please reach out to us via email or give us a call at our office. Your suggestions, help us to continue creating meaningful and accessible experiences for everyone. Here's to a new year filled with adventure, and unforgettable moments.



Remembering BucksVision



BucksVision has been fortunate to receive donations in memory of some incredible supporters.

It's lovely to see friends and family coming together to make dedications to their loved ones while also contributing to our cause. Platforms like Much Loved make this process seamless, allowing loved ones to leave a tribute and financial gift to BucksVision.

We have noticed a growing trend of families choosing donations instead of flowers at funerals. This option allows individuals to make a lasting impact by supporting

a cause that held significance for their family member. It's a thoughtful way for people to contribute and honour the memory of their loved ones.

For those interested in making a donation in memory of a loved one, we have envelopes readily available for funerals, making the process even more straightforward. If this resonates with you and you'd like to contribute in this way, please don't hesitate to get in touch. We're here to help facilitate the process and ensure that your contribution is both meaningful and impactful.

Thanks to Our Supporting Trusts and Foundations

We would like to extend our sincere thanks to all the Trusts and Foundations that have provided us with grants.

Each grant received is not just a financial boost but a vote of confidence in our work.

Recognising the responsibility that comes with this support, we're committed to using the funds carefully. Our goal is to make sure every pound contributes positively impacts the lives of our members.

These contributions are crucial to BucksVision's success, and we're eager to share the positive stories that will unfold from these collaborations.

This support plays a key role in helping us continue to make a

positive change in our community and we appreciate the opportunity to make a difference together.

Wishing everyone a New Year filled with shared successes and positive change!

Our thanks go to:

The 29th May 1961 Charity
The Ammco Trust
The Anson Charitable Trust
The Boutelle Bequest
The Carrington Charitable Trust
The Francis Winham Foundation
The Grace Trust
Helen Robertson Charitable Trust
The Roland Callingham Foundation
The Rothchild Foundation
Screwfix Foundation
Thomas Hickman's Charity
The Ulverscroft Foundation
Woodroffe Benton Foundation
Yorkshire Building Society Foundation



Talking Air Fryer

**By Lisa Redford,
Home Services Coordinator**

Having heard so many people singing the praises of air fryers, I was thrilled when I found out that Cobolt had brought out a talking version and ordered one straight away.

I am still at the experimental stage with cooking different foods with it but so far so good. The oven chips I did last night melted in the mouth!

The machine comes with audio and large print instructions and would be very easy to work for someone with a little useful vision.

For someone with no sight, such as myself, a lot of patience is needed. This is because the controls are touch sensitive. They have tactile edging to resemble buttons but when one is trying to navigate by feel, other functions get activated.

I have overcome some of this by placing bump-ons in front of, rather than on, some of the icons.

However, the instructions are easy to follow and contain cooking times and temperatures for many different types of food.

I would give it 3 out of 5 stars.

**Speechmaster Talking Air Fryer
£99.95. Call Cobolt Systems
on 01493 700172.**



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are one of the oldest companies within the Visual Impairment field today; we manufacture our own products to maintain quality and service excellence.

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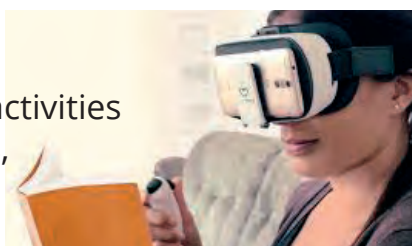
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Looking back on 2023 fundraising

Similar to many small charities, we've been significantly impacted by the current cost-of-living crisis.

Generating income has become increasingly challenging as people grapple with rising bills and reduced disposable income.

Despite this, the demand for our services continues to rise. Unfortunately, our funding doesn't stretch as far as it used to, given the escalating costs of petrol, utilities, and even basic office supplies like stationery and postage.

Despite the financial challenges, we are pleased to share some achievements from BucksVision in 2023, made possible by the support of our wonderful community. We extend our heartfelt thanks to everyone who played a part.

One highlight was our Christmas Raffle, which proved to be a great success, raising **£1,800**.

The festive spirit continued with events such as the Great Missenden Rotary Christmas Float. The Santa Float has become a cherished tradition for the BucksVision team, marking the start of the festive season.

A special mention must go to Ian Griffiths and the Beaconsfield Golf Club, who selected BucksVision as their charity of the year during Ian's captaincy. Their dedicated efforts resulted in an outstanding £7,000 raised for our cause.

BAP Pharma, Marlow, made a significant impact with a generous £5,000 donation, which will undoubtedly contribute greatly to our work.

We have welcomed our first-ever BucksVision Guardian. A local businessman has generously committed to supporting us with a significant donation over the next three years.

Support from our community has been outstanding, with donations



coming in from various sources, including Rotary Clubs, Bucks Badgers, Burnham Joggers, John Lewis (see above photo), Waitrose, Tesco, Co-op, and Masonic Lodges.

Your collective generosity is the backbone of our success, and we are profoundly grateful for each contribution.

As we reflect on 2023, we would like to forward our thanks for your commitment to making a positive impact on the lives of those with sight loss. **Thank you for being part of the BucksVision family. We look forward to another successful year ahead.**



Useful Contacts

NHS Volunteer Responder Scheme – 0808 196 3646

Volunteer support with shopping and hospital transport.

Bucks Integrated Sensory Service – 01296 479 970

Practical support for people with sight loss in Buckinghamshire.

Sensory Advice Resource Centre – 01908 401 135

Practical support for people with sight loss in Milton Keynes.

RNIB – 0303 123 9999

Advice and support with all aspects of sight loss.

Macular Society – 0300 3030 111

Information and support for people with macular conditions.

Glaucoma UK (formerly IGA) – 01233 648 170

Information and advice for people with Glaucoma.

Eye Casualty – 01296 315 939

A telephone triage service for patients concerned about sudden changes in their sight.

Age UK

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

Buckinghamshire – 01296 431 911

Milton Keynes – 01908 231 123

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