

 **Action** for blind people
working with **RNIB**

Newsletter

Summer 2016



Feedback from Events page 17



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Welcome

Things have been extremely busy at the BucksVision office.

We have run several new events recently, notably trips to local theatres and a family fun day aimed at children. These attracted a great deal of interest and we are keen to do more.

In July we held our annual De Fraine arts and crafts competition. The standard of entries this year was fantastic and my sincere thanks to all of you who participated.

We were delighted to welcome **Patrick Phillips** as our guest of honour, along with Aylesbury's Town Mayor, **Cllr. Barbara Russel**.

Patrick has supported our work for many years, most recently as our President. Sadly, Patrick has now stepped down but we were delighted to host him and to announce that his work has been recognised with an MBE. Well done, Patrick.

As always, to those of you who volunteer with us or support our work in some way, thank you.

We truly appreciate your support and will continue to provide the best service possible to people who have sight loss in our local area.

Many thanks.

Steve Naylor
Chief Executive

Staff Update



BucksVision has seen several staff changes since the Spring Newsletter with Victoria Reid leaving, and two colleagues, Sally Collier and Lisa Kennet, joining us.

Sally Collier

Sally joined us in June as our Administrator. Sally is many members and volunteers first point of contact with BucksVision and is also responsible for helping with office and general administration.

Sally has previously worked in both Wycombe Hospital as a Main Theatre Receptionist, and at Stoke Mandeville Hospital as the WRVS Cafe Manager.

Lisa Kennet

Lisa joined us in August. She is registered blind and brings with her personal experience and knowledge of sight loss. Lisa is responsible for the delivery of our Home Support Services, including our Befriending, Reading and Shopping Services.

Lisa has extensive experience of working with volunteers, having previously worked and volunteered in various administration and training roles, including the talking newspaper and radio production.

Both Sally and Lisa have some exciting new ideas on how to increase our reach and effectiveness, and we look forward to implementing them in the coming months.



Online Today

This course shows people how to use tablets and smartphones as well as how to get online.

It is a basic introduction aimed particularly at people who have never used these devices before.

The course, delivered by someone who is registered blind, is split over two sessions with an introduction to the devices in the morning followed by hands-on practice in the afternoon.

We run courses in Aylesbury, Milton Keynes and Wycombe on a monthly basis.

“It was absolutely brilliant. I learnt so much useful information that I will put into practice.”

Jo Ann Knight

Online Today attendee

“Hugely helpful. It was so good to try something completely different.”

Susan Wills

Online Today attendee

Our next Online Today sessions:

**Friday 16 September 2016
High Wycombe Library**

**Monday 17 October
BucksVision, Aylesbury**

**Friday 18 November
Acorn House, Milton Keynes**

**Tuesday 13 December
High Wycombe Library.**

Both sessions will run from 10.00am to 3.30pm.

To attend please contact Alison Deuchars on:

01296 487 556

adeuchars@bucksvision.co.uk



Getting your confidence ready for work

Would you like to work but lack confidence?

We will be running a two-day workshop later this year which will provide you with guidance, through individual and group support, to help you build your confidence and skills for work.

Living with sight loss can be challenging. But we believe everyone affected by sight loss should be able to face the future with confidence. Losing your sight doesn't mean losing the opportunity to work.

Our two-day workshop delivered by independent living specialists provides advice and practical solutions to build confidence and deal with employment issues.

The workshop covers:

- Practical solutions for the workplace
- Tips on using technology
- Support and guidance on getting into work
- Welfare benefits
- Advice on the emotional aspects of sight loss
- Looking after your eyes and making the most of your vision

To find out more about building your confidence for work, speak to us today.

Alison Deuchars

01296 487 556

adeuchars@bucksvision.co.uk





Calling all cyclists

Thanks to the efforts of Richard King and Fred Minns, BucksVision has set up a Tandem Club in Milton Keynes. The Club has several tandems which are ready to be taken out by keen cyclists.

Volunteer pilots will be provided for any members who wish to take part, so why not join up! Or read on to discover the difference joining the club has made to **Elaine Maries**.

“Before losing my sight I was a keen cyclist. So when I heard about the new Tandem Club I was excited to get involved. I got in contact with Fred Minns who took me out for a first go, and although cycling on a tandem takes a bit of getting used to, I absolutely loved it!

Fred was very good at explaining where we were going so I felt I could completely trust him. I have been out with Fred twice more, the last time for a 15 mile trip. Making use of Milton Keynes cycle ways means we can get out and about in MK without worrying about riding on the roads.

Getting involved with the group has given me a sense of freedom again, I can get out into the fresh air, keep fit and enjoy all of the experiences that cycling provides; I would thoroughly recommend joining the club.

And don't forget we need pilots too so if you know of anyone who would like to volunteer as a pilot get them to contact BucksVision.”

Get fit by Walking or Running



Live in Aylesbury and would like to improve your fitness?

BucksVision are working in partnership with groups such as **Parkrun**, to make running and walking accessible.

Parkrun is a weekly 5k running (and walking) event run by volunteers at Meadowcroft. They are keen to be accessible to all and are working with their volunteers to provide guided support to anyone who needs it.

One Parkrun volunteer **Alison Roberts** has recently become a BucksVision volunteer. Here she talks about why she got in touch with us:

“My name is Alison, and I am 56 years old. I really enjoy walking and running, and being outside enjoying the countryside is a treat for me, no matter the weather!

As I no longer work, I decided that I would like to get involved in volunteering.

Having found out about BucksVision it seemed a natural step for me to get involved as a walking and running Guide for people with sight loss.

I currently attend Parkrun every week assisting runners to achieve their goals and I would be delighted to be a Guide walker or runner for anyone who would like to participate.”

Great Thames Row

Gold-medal winner, Naomi Riches MBE, is preparing to embark on her latest and toughest challenge.

She aims to set a new world record as the fastest woman to row the length of the River Thames solo -165 miles non-stop from Lechlade to Gravesend Royal Pier. Setting off at 4:50pm on Saturday 17th September 2016 the goal is to do it in 50 hours or less.

Naomi, London 2012 Paralympic gold medal winner and six-time world champion rower, is taking on the **#165challenge** to raise money for IN-vision, a charity which raises awareness and funds for treatment of the debilitating eye condition Nystagmus.

As a child, Naomi was diagnosed with Nystagmus which makes focussing difficult, particularly on moving objects as her eyes are involuntarily and constantly moving.

Nystagmus affects about one in 1,000 and is the most common form of visual impairment in children.

At school, Naomi was bullied for being different and was known as 'the blind girl'. She became patron of IN-vision after her gold medal triumph.

“More than anything else in my life I wanted to be known as Naomi Riches and not be defined by my disability. I want to be known for what I am able to do, not what I cannot do.”

The Great Thames Row for Naomi is not just about that personal sense of achievement, it is about encouraging people to celebrate ability over disability.

To find out more:
www.thegreatthamesrow.org
www.in-vision.org.uk

Living with Sight Loss

This free one day course of workshops and discussion sessions offers practical and emotional support for people adjusting to sight loss and those close to them.

The course will include information on:

- Getting out and about
- Practical skills for everyday life
- Meeting new people
- Using technology
- Looking after your eyes
- Making the most of your leisure time
- Your emotional wellbeing.

The next Living with Sight Loss course is taking place on **Wednesday 5th October** at **High Wycombe Library**. It will run from 10am to 3.30pm and a light lunch will be provided.

Please call 01296 487 556 to book a place now. Friends and family are very welcome to attend.

NHS & Accessible Information

The NHS Standard for accessible information came into effect in July this year.

This means that you can notify your GP Practice Manager of your required accessible format. You can do this in writing, by letter or, if available, by email.

The RNIB have prepared a template letter for visually impaired people to give to the manager at their GP practice.

It can be requested from **BucksVision** or it can be downloaded directly from the **RNIB** website:

www.rnib.org.uk
(under NHS campaign)



OrCam MyReader

The BucksVision team were excited to have a new piece of equipment demonstrated to us recently by member Michael Brackley.

Michael has recently purchased the **OrCam MyReader** and he says that it has “changed his and his wife’s life”.



The OrCam consists of a very small camera, with an earpiece, which is fixed on to the side of glasses. The camera is attached to a small controlling unit, by a cable, which can be put in a pocket or carried in a small bag. The purpose of the OrCam is to take a still picture of any text that is either in front of you or up to about 3m away. The camera will then read the text to you via the earpiece.

Michael, who is totally blind, told us how much a difference this had made to his life in the few weeks he has had the equipment.

“The OrCAM is brilliant. It has given me my independence back. I am now able to read the newspaper, my mail and even shop names. What I also find particularly great is that I can use it to read the menu, so I no longer have to rely on someone else. They are well worth the money and I can’t recommend them highly enough”.

Michael has offered to demonstrate the OrCam to anyone interested at our resource room in Aylesbury or you can request a free demonstration from the company.

It is possible that it will be easier to adapt to the OrCam if you have experience of using screen readers or other text to speech software.

The cost of the OrCam is currently £1600, if you are registered.

**For more details contact:
BucksVision - 01296 487 556
OrCam - 0800 358 5323
www.orcam.com**



Accessing Digital Radios

In view of the recent initiative to help people get online, it may be a good time to mention a digital radio I've just purchased.

The Roberts Stream 107 and the rest of the Stream range can be controlled from your phone or tablet, so if you can access your tablet, you can access this range of radios.

Digital radios have always been an issue for blind and visually impaired people. They normally display menus, and require you to be able to see the display in order to operate them with any

degree of accuracy. However, by running a small program on your phone, all controls are spoken, and it is possible to:

- Set up presets and favourites
- Tune the radio
- And access basic settings.

Whilst a few minutes help from a sighted person may be required initially, once set up, you'll be good to go.

I'd be happy to demonstrate this set to anyone interested.

David Reynolds
(South East Division)

Living Paintings - FREE library service



Living Paintings

Living Paintings has a growing range of audio and tactile books for blind and partially sighted people of all ages.

For groups we provide books which can be enjoyed by a number of people at the same time. We currently have approximately 3,500 Touch to See Book Club members across the UK. If someone would like to start a group then please get in touch as we can help you set one up. (See following page for more information).

For adults these include: a wonderful selection of Albums that cover diverse topics such as famous works of Art, Architecture, Garden Design, tours of popular British Cities and Nature.

For children these include:

- **Living Picture Books** that bring to life the illustrations in classic story books
- **Teacher Resource Packs** that support National Curriculum Subjects
- **Topical Packs** that provide fun and interest
- **Art History Book Packs** that introduce an artist and their work.

Any blind or partially sighted person is welcome to join the library as can their carers, teachers and families.

The postal library service is completely free. All books are sent out with a return address label so that you can return them without any cost to yourself. Loans are normally made for three months but can be extended at any time.

You can join at
www.livingpaintings.org
or phone us on
01635 299 771

Living Paintings: Touch to See Book Clubs

Many of our club members use our books as inspiration to create their own works of art.

Here is some feedback from a club leader in the South East of England:

“I was very excited to open our delivery from Living Paintings and share van Gogh’s ‘Sunflowers’ at our meeting on Monday. We each had a tactile Sunflower painting, a coloured copy of the painting and silk sunflowers. This was a great recipe for inspiring art making.

The tactile images had an immediate and extremely positive effect, allowing everyone the opportunity to touch-see at their own pace. It brought the painting to life.

I then handed everyone a large canvas on which to create their own Sunflowers. Most of the members felt the tactile image with one hand and drew with the other.

Each member’s work of art was a mixture of painting and low relief tactile versions, using wires, plaster mod-roc and collaged papers.

Living Paintings books have gorgeous paintings, beautifully made thermoforms, lovely narration/story telling with wonderful music. Thank you Living Paintings.”



Images reproduced by kind permission of Living Paintings

De Fraine Competition

The 2016 Ellen Margaret de Fraine competition took place on Friday 22nd July.

Our Chief Executive Steve Naylor hosted the event and we had several guests attend including Patrick Phillips, Aylesbury Town Mayor, Cllr. Barbara Russel, and our Vice Presidents Sir Henry Aubrey-Fletcher, and John Gilder.

The day kicked off with the performances, followed by the stories, poetry and limericks. There was also a chance to take part in a fun quiz before enjoying some fantastic entertainment from a ladies A Capella quartet. After this the trophies and shields were presented by the Mayor and Sir Henry, with the ultimate prize of the de Fraine Shield going to South East Division.

Our many thanks go to everyone involved with de Fraine, without all of the support we receive we would not be able to hold this event.

Trophy Winners

Best Creative Writing Entry
Sigrid Muller (Mid)

Best Poetry Entry
Susan Silver (South East)

Best in Cookery
Deborah Brewer (Wycombe)

Best knitting entry
Audrey Creasey (South East)

Best Craft Entry
Jackie Sprules (South East)

Best entry in Art
Joan Woodward (Mid)

Best three blooms
Lal Budha (Wycombe)

Best flower arranging
Maria Vogel (Wycombe)

Best hanging basket
Susan Baldwin (South East)

Best in Horticultural
Maria Vogel (Wycombe)

De Fraine Competition

Best Newcomer
Jackie Sprules (South East)

Best in show
Susan Silver (South East)

Most entries
South East Division

Winner
South East Division

Rankings

- 1st South East
- 2nd Wycombe
- 3rd Chiltern
- 4th Mid
- 5th Milton Keynes
- 6th Marlow





Working Age Cream Tea

On Wednesday 6th July twelve members of Mid Division visited St Leonard's Church, Grendon Underwood to enjoy afternoon cream teas and cakes. They were joined there by two members who live in Grendon.

The teas take place on the first Wednesday of each month from April to October from 2-4pm and provide an opportunity for members from the local community to meet and chat.

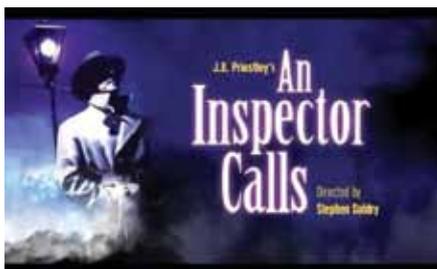
The Mid Division members travelled to Grendon in a mini

bus which was financed from Mid Division funds and driven by Carol, a volunteer from Grendon.

The teas are hosted by Peggy and Brian Fuller from Grendon. Brian is also a volunteer driver for Mid Division and his wife produces all the homemade scones and cakes.

Although there is no fixed charge, donations are invited and some of the money this year has been donated to the Christian Aid project supporting the people of Burkina Faso, an African country on the edge of the Sahara Desert.

Event Feedback



An Inspector Calls

Saturday 30th April

Touch tour and audio-described performance at Wycombe Swan Theatre.

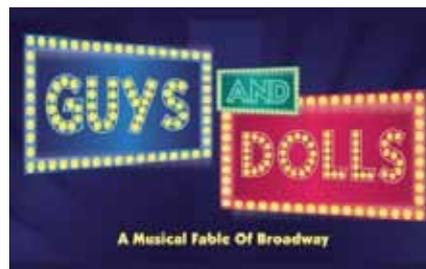
“Thank you for arranging this theatre trip with audio description and touch-tour. My daughter and I enjoyed it very much.”



Family Fun Day

Sunday 22nd May

Our Family Fun Day, which we ran jointly with VICTA, was a great success. The weather held out for us and all of the families had a great time enjoying the activities. We hope to run similar events in the future.



Guys and Dolls

Thursday 17th June

Touch tour and audio described performance at Milton Keynes Theatre.

“I took my daughter as my companion and we both thoroughly enjoyed the touch tour. It was amazing to see how much effort and brilliance is put into putting on such a performance.”

“The touch tour was excellent”

Waddesdon Manor

Wednesday 13th July

Trip to visit the Manor

A chance to handle some of Waddesdon's collection and learn more about the Manor and the gardens was greatly enjoyed by all of the participants.

Get Healthy Bucks!



Would you like support to make healthy changes to your lifestyle?

Perhaps you would like to:

- Have more energy
- Lost weight
- Eat more healthily
- Be more active
- Be happier
- Stop smoking
- Save money
- And ultimately become a fitter and healthier you?

If you have answered yes to any of the questions above then why not register your interest with **Get Healthy Bucks** free service today.

To register:

Telephone 01628 857 311

or email

info@gethealthybucks.co.uk

or go online

www.gethealthybucks.co.uk

You can also ask your GP or any other Buckinghamshire Health and Social Care professional to make a referral on your behalf.

After registering, a **Get Healthy Coach** will contact you to discuss what support you would like. They will let you know what services you can access and can even pass on your contact details to these services. Your coach may get back in touch with you to check you are receiving the support you need.



If you live in Milton Keynes and enjoy singing, why not join a sing along group.

Less formal than a choir and very enjoyable and beneficial to your health and wellbeing, the Blue Notes Singing Group could be exactly what you are looking for.

The group meet fortnightly on a Tuesday, from 3-4pm, at Centrecom Meeting Place in Central Milton Keynes, during school term only. You don't need to be good at singing, but simply enjoy a singalong with other people in a friendly environment.

This singing group has been set up for people with Parkinsons, as singing is considered to be beneficial for this illness, as well as for many other medical conditions and has proved to be very popular. The Blue Notes will certainly welcome you, and this is an excellent chance for you to enjoy informal singing sessions on a regular basis.

There is a charge of £3 per session, payable when you attend, and if you are unable to get there under your own steam, BucksVision may be able to help with transport.

**Centrecom's address is:
602 North Row,
Secklow Gate West
MK9 3BJ**

Situated behind Central MK Library, Centrecom has its own free car park and is within walking distance of several bus stops.

Autumn Term dates are:
**September 20th
October 4th & 18th
November 1st & 15th
December 6th.**

If you are interested in joining in, please contact **Padma** on **01908 377 058** or **Vanessa** on **01908 643 816** before the start of the term, so we can co-ordinate numbers and arrange transport if needed.

Get Help with Your Tax

Many people find tax matters confusing, but there is help available. RNIB has a team who support people with sight loss with income tax issues. The service, supported by HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC), provides information about tax allowances such as the Blind Person's Allowance and the Marriage Allowance, which can reduce your tax bill.

RNIB can help you to claim the tax allowances you are entitled to. In most cases claims can be taken over the phone, with no forms to complete.

RNIB can also help with general queries related to income tax, tax-free savings, VAT-free products and tax credits. The team can contact HMRC if you need help with resolving problems and to arrange help with completing tax forms and self assessment tax returns.

Blind Person's Allowance

People registered as blind or severely sight impaired can claim the Blind Person's Allowance. The allowance is £2,290. This can reduce tax by £458 this year. You can backdate the allowance to the previous four years. You can also transfer the allowance to your husband, wife or civil partner.

Marriage Allowance

The Government introduced the Marriage Allowance tax-break in 2015. It lets you and your partner share part of your tax-free Personal Allowance to help lower your overall tax bill. In 2016/17 you can transfer £1,100 of your Personal Allowance to your partner which can save up to £220 in tax.

To apply for the Marriage Allowance you need to be married or in a civil partnership. Both partners need to be born on or after 6 April 1935. One partner needs to have an income of under £11,000, and the other partner must be a basic rate taxpayer.

**To contact
RNIB's Tax Advice team**

For help and information on income tax and HMRC related issues you can call RNIB on:

**0345 330 4897
0151 702 5721**

or email:
tax@rnib.org.uk

Or online, go to
www.rnib.org.uk/tax

Optelec Clearview +
Four years old but in good working condition. Purchased for £1195 looking for offers around £200.

**Please contact BucksVision
for more information
01296 487 556**



Optelec Clearview Magnifier
Second hand but in good condition. £150 or nearest offer.

**Please contact BucksVision
for more information
01296 487 556**

Donations

We are always grateful to receive donations as they help us to deliver services to blind and partially sighted people across Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes.

£10 £25 £50 Other

If you are eligible, please Gift Aid your donation by signing the declaration on the page overleaf.

Name _____

Address _____

Postcode _____

Telephone _____

Email _____

Payment Options - I would like to pay by:

- Cheque**
Please make cheques payable to BucksVision
- Credit / Debit Card**
Please call BucksVision on 01296 487 556.
- Bank Standing Order**
Please request a Standing Order mandate form from BucksVision
- Please return this form to:**
BucksVision, 143 Meadowcroft, Aylesbury, HP19 9HH

Gift Aid declaration

Boost your donation by 25p of Gift Aid for every £1 you donate.

Gift Aid is reclaimed by BucksVision from the tax you pay for the current tax year. Your address is needed to identify you as a current UK taxpayer.

In order to Gift Aid your donation please fill in the details below:

I want to Gift Aid my donation of £ and any donations I make in the future or have made in the past four years to BucksVision.

I am a UK taxpayer and understand that if I pay less Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations in that tax year it is my responsibility to pay any difference.

My Details

Title	First name or initial(s)
<hr/>	
Surname	
<hr/>	
Full Home Address	
<hr/>	
<hr/>	
Postcode	
<hr/>	
Signed	Date
<hr/>	

Please notify BucksVision if you

Want to cancel this declaration

Change your name or home address

No longer pay sufficient tax on your income and/or capital gains

If you pay Income Tax at the higher or additional rate and want to receive the additional tax relief due to you, you must include all your Gift Aid donations on your Self-Assessment tax return or ask HM Revenue and Customs to adjust your tax code.