

Winter 2016

Newsletter



**Andrew holds
the Paralympic flame.
Page 4**



Ace shot Hewitt! Page 13



Christmas Party. Page 7

Contents

1	Welcome
3	Come and Meet the Team / We Want Your Views
4	Paralympics Event
5	"I Would Definitely Recommend Volunteering"
7	Children's Christmas Party
8	Starting Point
9	Bletchley Park Trip
10	Hell-Fire Caves
11	Focus on...Eye For Art
12	Interactive Art
13	Would You Like to Learn Braille? / Ace Shot Hewitt!
14	Archery Report
15	New Clinic at Amersham Hospital
16	Warm Front Payments
17	2017 Calendars and Diaries / Adverts
18	Donation Form
19	Gift Aid

BucksVision

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Open 9am - 5pm weekdays

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www.bucksvision.co.uk

Annual Report



BucksVision's Annual Report and Accounts for the year 2015/16 have been completed. If you would like a copy please contact the office or download it from our website.

Registered Charity
Number 1147814



Welcome

**Merry Christmas from
all of the staff at BucksVision**



**This month's edition contains
a rich variety of articles.**

As you will see, we attended the Paralympics celebration in Aylesbury, with one of our members, Andrew Stewart, proudly carrying the torch. Well done Andrew, you deserve to be this edition's cover star!

A recent highlight for me was meeting Alan Hewitt at the Eye for Art craft club in Milton Keynes. Alan is 82 years old and recently won a gold medal in acoustic rifle shooting. I think that this goes to show that neither vision impairment nor age has to hold you back and stop you doing things. Well done to you, too, Alan!

As always, I want to thank all of you who support our work in some way. To all of our volunteers, thank you for your generous time; without this,

many of our members would be completely alone and isolated.

Our volunteers include our trustees, of course, and I am very grateful for their time and efforts in helping us to deliver a better service.

I also want to thank all of you who make regular donations to us. These are always wonderful to receive and are often unexpected. We recently received a generous donation of £130.50 raised by pupils of Omega House at the Amersham School, during their Charity Week. Thank you very much.

I hope that you have a restful and wonderful Christmas.

Steve Naylor,
Chief Executive



Come and Meet the Team

We will be organising a big get together early next year so that our members and volunteers can meet the staff and trustees who work for BucksVision.

The meeting will involve a review of what BucksVision achieved in 2016 and a chance to put forward your suggestions for 2017.

The day won't all be about work though, as we are planning to include a quiz and an equipment demonstration!

So if you are itching to tell us about an idea you have or would simply like to catch up with the team then please let us know and once the details are confirmed we will be in touch.

Please do let us know if you are interested in attending so we can contact you with the confirmation details.

We Want to Hear From You!

2017 will soon be here and we would love to hear what you have been up to in 2016.

If you have any stories you would like to share or ideas of what you would like us to feature in our newsletter then please get in touch with us.

Deadlines for the 2017 newsletter are:

Spring	31 January
Summer	30 April
Autumn	31 July
Winter	31 October

We can accept stories and ideas by:

Phone

01296 487 556

Email

adeuchars@bucksvision.co.uk

Post

BucksVision
143 Meadowcroft
Aylesbury
HP19 9HH

Celebration at the Home of Paralympics



BucksVision took part in the fantastic Paralympics event in Aylesbury on Friday 2nd September.



Staff and volunteers ran our information stall, which got rather drenched, but was otherwise well visited.

And they also took part in the Parade of Light. Participants carried colourful foam flowers



and each group carried a lantern to light the way.

BucksVision member Andrew Stewart also had the special honour of taking part in the final procession of the flame across the park with only three other people. Andrew's part was the most exciting as he carried the flame over to fireworks to start the fantastic finale.

BucksVision were honoured to have taken part in the evening and were delighted at how well Paralympics GB performed in Rio.



“I would definitely recommend volunteering”

To find out more about this or our many other volunteering roles go to www.bucksvision.co.uk or call 01296 487 556.

Volunteer Supervisor, Lisa Kennet (LK) took time out of her work day to interview Sharon Taylor (ST) who has volunteered for BucksVision for two years.

LK: How did you come to volunteer for BucksVision?

ST: Well I was already volunteering for the Milton Keynes Reader Service when I found out that the local BucksVision division didn't have enough drivers, so I offered to help and became a BucksVision volunteer.

LK: So what do you do for BucksVision?

ST: I pick people up for the Lunch Bunch club once

a month; I've taken people to the Buckland Club and I also gave a talk at the Peartree centre about what I used to do for a living.

LK: And what was your job?

ST: I used to be Superintendent Registrar at Milton Keynes so I gave them a talk about births, deaths and marriages. I got a couple of volunteers to play act so we went through a sort of mock ceremony. It seemed to go down quite well, actually.

People found it quite amusing. I also did talks at the Buckland club. I think it's because I can't stop talking!

LK: (laughs) and that was for the club attendees. It sounds really interesting. So how long have you been volunteering for BucksVision?

ST: Since October 2014.

LK: Has it been different to what you expected?

ST: No, not really, because all I do is help out with driving. They text when they need me.

LK: And have you met a variety of people through your role?

ST: You do meet a variety of people and they're so grateful that you get them to events so they can have a social experience as well.

LK: And what do you do for the MK Reader Service?

ST: I have three regulars who I support, I take two shopping and the other I read to once a week.

LK: So you get to do a variety of things with them?

ST: Absolutely. A totally different experience because they all have different requirements. For instance the gentleman I read for is

into Dick Francis books so I've really got into them as well.

LK: What do you like about volunteering in general?

ST: I like the fact that it gives me a purpose and a structure to my week. I'm just a very social person. I like to meet lots of people and have different experiences; I couldn't be at home all the time.

LK: Would you recommend volunteering to other people?

ST: Yes and I have! Some of my friends have retired and I've got them doing different things. I've told them that it's such a good experience. Go and get involved and give something back to the community.

LK: Thank you for talking to me Sharon, it has been lovely to find out about you and your role.

NB: The MK Reader Service is a separate charity that we work alongside. However we have recently launched our own Reader and Shopper service for rest of Bucks.

Children's Christmas Party



"Thanks for a wonderful afternoon - we had a great time."

After the success of our joint Family Day with VICTA in May we decided to have a Christmas Party!

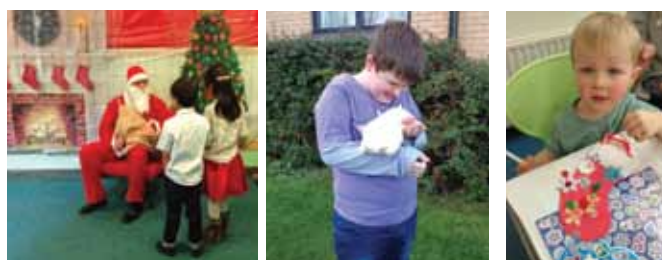
On Sunday 13 November seven families arrived at the Caldecotte Centre in MK for an afternoon of fun.

After a tasty lunch the children had a choice of being creative or taking part in some fun party games including pass the parcel, Santa's sleigh and musical ice statues.

By this time some special guests had arrived and were waiting outside to meet the children. Declan the Donkey and Frosty the Chicken were just some of the animals very

happy to meet everyone.

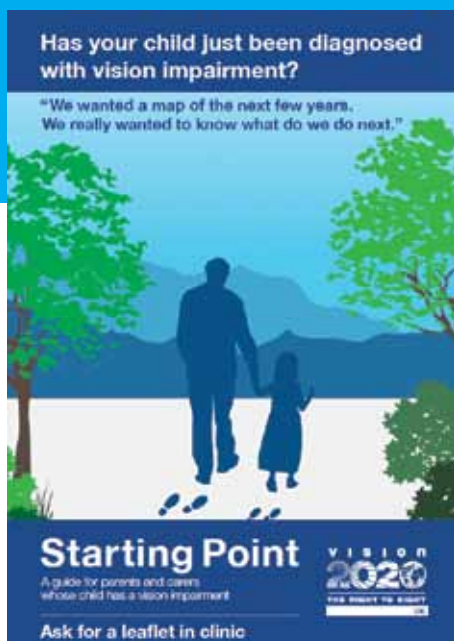
After saying hello to our new friends everyone went back into the warm to enjoy some more party games before our eagerly anticipated very special guest arrived; Santa!



After everyone had visited Santa and received their gift it was time to go home.

"The children loved meeting the animals and Santa!"

We plan to run more events with VICTA next year.



Starting Point

A guide for parents and carers whose child has a vision impairment.

The aim of **Starting Point** is to signpost families to resources and professionals that can help with the first steps in accepting their child's diagnosis.

How can Starting Point help

You probably have a million different questions. You may want to know which organisations can help you, what resources are available or simply want to know “what do I do next?” You may also want to meet other parents and carers who have been through a similar experience. And that's where Starting Point can help.

They can:

- Explain your child's sight condition and treatment
- Help you and family understand what your child can see
- Provide advice on your child's development
- Put you in touch with other parents
- Connect you to national and local support organisations
- Give emotional and practical support for the whole family

Their advice areas include:

- Early years
- Education
- Leisure activities
- Supporting independence
- Health issues

Access Starting Point today:
vision2020uk.org.uk/startingpoint

Or if you would prefer to talk to someone, you can contact them through their Helplines:

Action for Blind People / RNIB
0303 123 9999

Blind Children UK / Guide Dogs
0800 781 1444

Visionary (for local organisations)
0208 090 9264

Bletchley Park



BucksVision's most popular Experience Day so far, took place on Tuesday 15th November, when a group of 45 people visited Bletchley Park.

Three fantastic guides each led a group on a tour to discover the mysteries behind Bletchley Park, once Britain's best kept secret.

After exploring the atmospheric Victorian estate, and finding out about the top secret world of World War II code-breaking, the groups were able to handle several artefacts including a telegraph transmitter.

Once the tour had finished all of the participants had free time to explore the rest of the site including the Turing Bombe exhibition, before enjoying a Q&A session with one of the guides.



"I had a wonderful time."

"I really enjoyed it."

Hell-Fire Caves!



On Wednesday 14 September BucksVision took a group of brave souls on a tour of the infamous Hell-Fire Caves in West Wycombe.

Our tour guide, Jack, was fantastic as he theatrically told us the history of the caves.



“Just a note to say thank you for successfully organising this ‘expedition’. It was certainly an unusual, and surprising choice of destination for the visually impaired but my friend Janet and I really enjoyed the trip.

Everyone agreed that we got so much more from our visit because of our very animated guide, Jack, whose dramatic tales really brought the history to life!” **Sue, High Wycombe**



Focus on Eye For Art



This feature will focus on one of BucksVision's many brilliant volunteer run clubs across the county. This time we will focus on Eye For Art, the arts and crafts group in Milton Keynes.

Eye For Art have a long established history and is a much loved club. Run entirely by volunteers, many of whom have sight loss, the club concentrates on creating fantastic pieces, such as their popular hand painted silk scarves and beaded bracelets/necklaces, which are sold at various places across Milton Keynes.

An example of Eye for Art's work can be seen above and the members of the group

regularly enter BucksVision's annual de Fraine competition both individually and as a group.

"I'm with people who have the same interest as me. Everyone is very friendly. We are given an amazing variety of things to do by the extremely kind helpers. The results vary, some things turn out better than others, but it doesn't matter because we enjoy the activity."

Beatrice,
new Eye For Art member

If you are creative and live in Milton Keynes why not get in touch with us today to discuss joining the club.

Interactive Art

We had just started looking into putting on some craft workshops, when an email came in from PhD student Emilie Giles.



Emilie explores how e-textiles can be used as interactive tools for people with sight loss. At an initial meeting staff enjoyed trying out the material robots with LED lights for eyes and woven strands linked to a computer which when strummed made sounds similar to a harp.



We found the concept so fascinating that we organised a session for members. On 3 October, four working age members met with Emilie who showed them her various pieces.

"I found it fascinating that material could be linked up to a computer to produce sound when touched."
Kirsty, Member

As everyone really enjoyed the session we have booked Emilie to deliver six sessions next year.

So if you live in the Aylesbury area and are interested in coming along to the workshops next year, please give us a call.



Want to learn Braille?

BucksVision has recently recruited a new volunteer, Waseem Shah, who will be teaching Braille in the Aylesbury area to anyone who would like to learn to read Braille or simply find out more about how it works.

Waseem introduces himself -

“I am an experienced Braille user who has taught Braille to college students and staff with multiple disabilities; from blindness to anxiety issues. I have also taught people who are free from disability who simply want to learn Braille for personal or other reasons.

I have volunteered for this role and as I am severely sight impaired I can fully understand the difficulty of learning Braille and will do my best to make it as simple and easy as possible.”

If you would be interested in learning Braille with Waseem please get in touch with us on 01296 487 556.

Ace shot Hewitt!



Congratulations to Milton Keynes member Alan Hewitt, 82, who has won a gold medal in the National League for acoustic small bore rifle shooting.

Alan belongs to the **Deanshanger Rifle Club** and has only been shooting for 18 months. The rifle club shooters aim using sound rather than sight- they wear headphones that emit a high pitched sound to help guide them to the target.

Deanshanger Rifle Club meets on Monday afternoons and would welcome new members.

“I would thoroughly recommend joining the Rifle Club. It’s wonderful and I love every minute of it.” So why not give it a go and in a year’s time you may be winning gold medals like Alan!

Archery

“The volunteers were so understanding”

“I was impressed at how well organised it was”

These were just two of the comments from members who participated in the archery day, part of our sports and activities programme, on 14 October at the Whiteleaf Bowmen Club.

Ten visually impaired people shot five or six rounds before the five sighted volunteers had a go, followed by the professionals who showed us how it should be done!

We had excellent coaching from Ivan (co-ordinator for fun shoots at Whiteleaf Bowmen) and his three merry men.



Our own Robin Hood was John Wood, while Jackie Sprules was vying for the Maid Marion title.



The point (pardon the pun) of this day was to give sight-impaired members a try at archery and if they wished to take it further, we would put them in touch with the archery secretary at British Blind Sport.

After all the jollity and hard work outdoors, it was time to warm up at the Whip Inn at Lacey Green, where we tucked into a delicious lunch.

Thank you to everyone who made the day possible and were brave enough to stand beside blind people shooting arrows around! It was certainly another string to our bow!

Dedicated clinic for AMD opens at Amersham Hospital

On 21 October BucksVision attended the official opening of the new one-stop clinic at Amersham Hospital for patients with wet age-related macular degeneration.

This dedicated clinic means that patients can be assessed and treated in one go. Previously patients would attend separate appointments but with a one-stop clinic they can be seen and treated within the same appointment, halving the number of hospital visits required.

To make this happen the NHS have set up a partnership with the pharmaceutical company, Novartis.

Jenny Ricketts, Divisional Director for surgery and critical care commented:

“This is a very exciting service development that supports our key aim of improving quality and experience for patients.

The Trust is very proud of the team that has developed a workable and sustainable solution to accommodate the increasing number of patients requiring this sight-saving treatment.”

Dimitrios Georgiopoulos, MD and Chief Scientific Officer at Novartis Pharmaceuticals UK Ltd, added:

“This partnership is part of Novartis’ ongoing commitment to work with the NHS to understand and address the challenges facing eye care services across the UK.

The launch of this new service is the result of the strong collaboration between Novartis Pharmaceuticals UK Ltd and Buckinghamshire Healthcare NHS Trust. It demonstrates a shared dedication to improving care for patients.”

TOP PHOTO: Matron Stephanie Hartley cuts the ribbon to officially open the new clinic.



Warm Front Winter Payments



The Warm Home Discount is a government backed scheme which provides households who receive certain benefits with an additional one off discount on their electricity bill between October 2016 and April 2017.

You can also qualify for the discount if you use a pre-pay or pay-as-you-go electricity meter. The discount won't affect your Cold Weather or Winter Fuel Payment.

To qualify for the discount the following needs to have applied to you on 10 July 2016

- your electricity supplier was part of the scheme
 - your name (or your partner's) was on the bill
 - you were getting the Guarantee Credit element of Pension Credit (even if you get Savings Credit as well)
-

If you don't qualify

You may be able to apply directly to your electricity supplier for help if you don't get the Guarantee Credit element of Pension Credit but:

- you're on a low income
- you get certain means-tested benefits

Check with your supplier to see if you're eligible and how to apply.

How to claim

If you qualify for the discount, you'll get a letter this autumn or winter telling you either:

- you don't have to apply - you'll get the discount automatically
- to apply by 28 February 2017 (the letter will tell you why and how)

You'll receive your letter by 16 December at the latest.

If you don't get a letter

Contact the Warm Home Discount Team if you don't get a letter but believe you qualify.

Warm Home Discount Scheme

Telephone: 0345 603 9439

**Monday to Friday,
8:30am to 4:30pm**



Diaries / Calendars



We have 2017 large print diaries and calendars available in stock.

If you would like to order for yourself or a friend the prices are as follows:

A6 Pocket Diary complete	£5.35
A6 Insert only	£4.75
A5 Midi Diary	£7.15
A4 Desk Diary	£8.99
A3 Calendar	£5.75

These would make great Christmas gifts for friends or family who struggle with standard calendars and diaries.

Orders can be placed by calling reception on **01296 487 556** or by emailing **reception@bucksvision.co.uk**

Adverts



The Royal National College for the Blind, the UK's leading specialist residential college of further education for people with a visual impairment, is proud to offer a range of courses to students aged 16 to 25 and adult trainees aged 18 to 65.

Discover how we help you move into Higher Education, employment or self-employment.

Call us on **01432 376 621** to arrange a personalised tour or email **info@rnc.ac.uk**

FOR SALE

**Intel Reader with stand.
£350 ONO**

Portable device which captures print and reads it back to you. It has tactile buttons, voice menus, and simple navigation for easy operation.

Contact 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)
Surname	
Full Home Address	
Postcode	
Signed	Date

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.