



BucksVision
Visual Impairment Charity

**Autumn
2023**

Newsletter



Tennis Superstar! Page 10

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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143 Meadowcroft, Aylesbury, HP19 9HH



01296 487 556



reception@bucksvision.co.uk



www.bucksvision.co.uk

Opening Hours

Monday - Friday

Office - 9am to 5pm

Phone Line - 9am to 4pm

Follow BucksVision's social media for our latest news



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Welcome

Steve Naylor
Chief Executive

Welcome to our Autumn newsletter.

As you may know, our Operations Manager, Alison, is moving on having been with BucksVision for 12 years. I joined 8 years ago and Alison has proven to be a brilliant colleague.

Her contribution to the charity cannot be overstated and I know that you will join me in thanking her for her work and wishing her the very best for the future.

Alison will be replaced by Anna Kilbride, who joins us at the end of October. Alison and I were hugely impressed when we interviewed Anna and are confident that she will fit well into our small team and will excel here.

The other significant change may be less obvious but is equally important. We say

farewell to two long-term trustees and welcome several new ones.

Ian Laing and Peter Robbins have been trustees of BucksVision for many years and have actively supported the Board throughout their time with us. Ian is moving on geographically and Peter is stepping down due to health issues.

Joining us are Val Caldwell, David Cole and Dean Marks. Each bring unique skills to the Board and you can read more about them on our new refreshed website, bucksvision.co.uk.

I want to thank Alison for her work over the years, all of our trustees for their contribution to the charity, and all of you who support our work. Thank you, we really do appreciate your support.

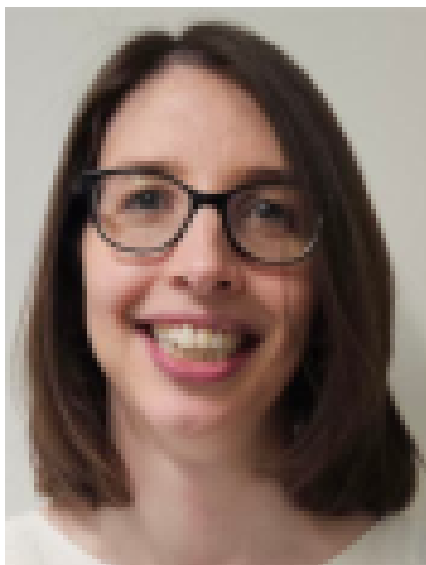
Goodbye and Hello

Goodbye, Alison Deuchars

We are sad to say farewell to Alison, our Operations Manager.

Alison has been with BucksVision for 12 years. Her dedication and skills have resulted in several well-deserved promotions over the years. She is a member of the senior management team and has played a vital role in the charity over the years.

Steve Naylor, Chief Executive said, *"Alison has been a joy to work with and a brilliant operational lead. We will all miss her dearly. We wish her the very best and are sure that exciting new opportunities lie in store for her."*



Hello, Anna Kilbride

We are delighted to announce that Anna Kilbride will be replacing Alison and joins us on 30th October.

Anna has spent the last few years as the Operations Manager at a private ambulance company and brings with her all of the skills required to be Operations Manager at BucksVision.

"I am looking forward to joining the management team at BucksVision, and becoming part of this wonderful charity that makes a difference to so many. I am also looking forward to meeting as many of you as I can over the coming months".

CHRISTMAS RAFFLE

Prizes include

50% off Hypnos Bed Voucher, 1 Night Bed and Breakfast at Holiday Inn Aylesbury, KJ Jungle Salsa Vacuum x 2, Afternoon Tea for 2 at Hartwell House, Afternoon Tea for 2 at Patisserie Valerie, £100 Amazon Voucher, bottle of Taittinger Rose Champagne, Tennessee Whisky, signed Tom Kerridge Cookbook, Wine, Bubbly, Chocolates, Bags and many more

To be drawn at BucksVision head office on 19th December 2023 at 12pm

Tickets
£1 each

Registered under the Gambling Act 2005, Licensee: LC202507-122883, Reg Charity No. 1141194
 Promoter: BucksVision, 143 Meadowcroft, Hylesburg, Bucks, HP19 9PH
 Tickets are not transferable and may not be purchased by persons under 18 years of age.

Tickets
£1 each

Christmas Raffle

We are excited to launch our Christmas Raffle.

You will find a book of 10 raffle tickets with this newsletter which gives you and your friends the opportunity to win lots of amazing prizes as well as supporting BucksVision. Tickets are £1 each, so costs £10 for a book.

Prizes include 50% off a Hypnos Bed, afternoon tea for two at Hartwell House, Sebo vacuum cleaners, £100 Amazon voucher, champagne and much more.

To get involved all you need to do is either buy tickets yourself and/or sell them to friends and family.

To do this:

- Complete yours or the person's contact details on the ticket stub (the left-hand side of the ticket)
- Tear off the main ticket/s to keep or give to the person
- Send back the stubs to BucksVision in the freepost envelope enclosed along with the payment slip.

Payment can be made via cheque, over the phone by card or by bank transfer.

If you would like more raffle ticket books please get in touch with Ruth our Fundraising Manager.

01296 329 691

rproudfoot@bucksvision.co.uk

Equipment and Information Days

In September we held our annual Equipment & Information Days in Milton Keynes, Chesham, Aylesbury and High Wycombe.

We had 27 Exhibitors overall, including several new ones and around 170 people came along, even in the rain, to learn of the help and support available for those with sight loss and hearing loss.

As well as providing information and support to the attendees the days also offered a chance for the exhibitors to network with each other, which was fantabulous to see!

Attendees included BucksVision members but also people new to our services; one lady was very grateful to her local church, who popped our flyer through her letter box resulting in her coming along.

During the course of the events we also sold a number of Christmas raffle tickets, so

be careful not to lose them! See page 5 for information on our raffle.

A huge thank you to everyone who made these events a real pleasure to organise, especially our loyal partners, who showed us why they are such an important part of what we do. We also received wonderful hospitality from all our venues for which we thank them.

We plan to do the same again next year at different locations, and on this note we would appreciate your help!

If you know of any venues which have large rooms with good acoustics, parking facilities, and are accessible by public transport, please do let us know.

We are trying to reach all areas of Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes, so everyone can get to these events to learn about the help that is available.



"Today was very successful, thank you for inviting us. It is great to have it for information as well as the equipment, and to network!" Maggie

"It was excellent, happy to support again in the future." Julian

"We were happy to be involved and would definitely be interested in any future events." Angela

**"I really enjoyed it, it was a really good day."
Equipment & Information Day attendee**



Befriending Week

Befriending Networks is a charity which aims to provide information and support to organisations delivering befriending services as well as raising the profile of befriending at a national level.

Each year they celebrate befriending across the country in Befriending Week which runs from 1st to 7th November and this year they are marking eleven years of celebrating.

This year, their theme is *Befriending is Support* reflecting the support befrienders give to befriendees, the support provided by befriending organisations to befrienders, and the support Befriending Network creates for the sector.

BucksVision will be marking the week by celebrating our home services on social media, sharing our stories and ending the week with a celebratory lunch for our befrienders and befriendees.



"Our befriending volunteers work one to one with their clients so a lot of them don't get to meet other befrienders. Our Befriending Week lunch gives them a chance to get together and share their experiences. Befriendees can also come along and enjoy the food and entertainment. The following quote shows just how important our befriending service is."

Lisa Redford, Home Services Coordinator.

"After losing my wife, I got into a complete muddle with my correspondence, having my befriender come in once a week to help with this has been a godsend, I don't know what I would do with out them." **Member matched with a Volunteer Reader**

Patient Ambassadors

Have you been supported by an Eye Care Liaison Officer (ECLO) at a local eye clinic?

Would you be willing to talk about your experience of this to others?

RNIB are looking for volunteers to become patient ambassadors for their local ECLO service.

Glaucoma Support Group

The Ophthalmology department at Buckinghamshire Healthcare NHS Trust are recommencing their Glaucoma support group.

This is an opportunity to find out more about your eye condition, discover stress-free techniques to instil your eye drops and learn about local and national support services.

For more information about becoming a Patient Ambassador or to find out more about the Glaucoma Support Group, please contact Julian Padmore (ECLO).

07701 393 524

julian.padmore@rnib.org.uk

About the ECLO Service

Eye Care Liaison Officers (ECLOs) have lots of knowledge on eye conditions and on helpful local and national services.

By offering dedicated individual care, ECLOs can talk to you about your worries and give you advice on how to lessen the impact your eye condition may have on your life.

ECLOs act as an important bridge between health and social services and are central to the support and wellbeing of patients in eye clinics. They also help prevent avoidable sight loss, by talking through treatment and helping people to understand their medication if necessary.

Congratulations Sarah!

Huge congratulations to Sarah Fortescue for winning a bronze medal for tennis at the World Blind Games this year.

The games, run by IBSA (International Blind Sports Association), happen every four years and are recognised as a key international tournament outside of the Paralympics for visually impaired sport.

Consisting of 10 different sports, including goalball, this was the first year that tennis was included. The event is held in a different country each time, but Sarah didn't have far to travel as the UK hosted the games in Birmingham.

This year Sarah also played at Wimbledon in the first ever VI Finals Tournament.

We first featured Sarah in 2017 when she had been selected as a reserve for Great Britain (GB) at the International Blind Tennis Tournament in Spain.

Two years later we interviewed Sarah for the newsletter after she was selected to play for GB in the tournament and later went on to win bronze!

Following her fantastic achievement of winning another bronze medal we caught up with her again.

How many tennis players were at the games?

Between 60-70. Both single and doubles games were played, in doubles my partner and I narrowly missed winning a bronze medal. It was a shame we came so close, but I was thrilled to bring back a medal in the singles.

Did you bring your own sighted helper with you?

No, we stayed in student accommodation at the university and volunteers showed us around and explained how everything worked. Our two GB coaches were on hand to provide any other assistance we needed. It was all very well organised.



Photo 2019 International Blind Tournament.
Credit - www.lta.org.uk

BucksVision Milton Keynes Area sponsor you, do you have a message for them?

I would like to send a big thank you. Travelling around the country to play in tournaments is expensive and getting sponsorship is extremely difficult. I am very grateful for their support.

So what's next for Sarah Fortescue the tennis player?

More of the same! There are lots of players coming along and the competition becomes harder. I plan to continue to enjoy the game and play to my best ability. There are always things to improve and work on, so it keeps me on my toes!

What would you say to someone looking to try a new hobby?

If I can inspire and encourage anyone to have a go at anything, be it sport, art or music, I would say don't think that you can't do it. I nearly didn't try tennis because I thought I wouldn't be able to see well enough to track the ball, but I did and it's made a huge difference to my confidence and my life, as well as having fun along the way!

And how would they start playing tennis?

Practicing with a sighted tennis-player or friend is a good start. To find out where the nearest club is you can email the LTA at: disabilitycompetitions@lta.org.uk

Meet our Corporate Partner

We are absolutely delighted to announce that ClearSight Opticians in Milton Keynes has become a BucksVision Corporate Partner!

We sat down with owner Arif Master to find out more about the great work they do and how we will be working together in the future.

Tell us about your business.

I established ClearSight Opticians in 1995 along with my wife, Sukaina, as an independent, family-run practice, with the aim of providing a high quality and professional service to patients.

I have been qualified as a Dispensing Optician and Contact Lens specialist for 32 years and have special accreditation in minor eye conditions. I am part of the Local Optical Committee (LOC) ensuring I keep up to date with optical guidelines and practice, and we have close links with the hospital eye department.

Sukaina is the practice manager and our daughter, Fatema, recently joined the practice as an Optometrist making it truly a family affair!

What is your ethos?

We believe what sets us apart is the personal touch. Our eye examinations are thorough; we will always take the time to address any issues you're facing and give you time to ask any questions you have.

We pride ourselves in ensuring we have the best equipment. We have invested in an OCT scanner which allows us to see a more extensive 3D view of the back of the eye. It has been proven to detect eye conditions such as glaucoma and macular degeneration many years before routine checks.

We specialise in quality eye wear and will advise on all your optical needs including choosing the right style of frames for you. We pledge the highest level of care to all who come to us.



Had you heard of BucksVision before?

Yes, being part of the LOC involves being aware of what services are available and more recently our Optometrist took part in a low vision module where she learnt more about BucksVision's services.

What motivated you to partner with BucksVision?

Learning more about BucksVision including how they go the extra mile to support people is rewarding. Understanding further the wide range of services BucksVision offer, and how much difference they make to patients, has really motivated us to support BucksVision.

What would you say to encourage others to become a corporate partner?

It's not easy to go through vision loss, but when you have people to talk to it makes all the difference! BucksVision is a lifeline to many people and without them a lot of individuals would feel extremely isolated and lonely, so supporting them fits in with our ethos.

Do you have any events that we can look out for?

Yes a Bucket Collection at **Morrisons** in **Milton Keynes** on **Friday 3rd November** **9.30am-4.30pm**.

Where can people find out more about you?

You can visit our website: www.clearsightvisioncare.com or call us on 01908 504740.

Talks to community groups

Would your group or business be interested in learning more about BucksVision and the work we do?

We are happy to provide speakers to:

- Community groups
 - Businesses
 - Schools
 - Colleges
 - Universities
 - Churches
-

Our speakers are happy to share all aspects of our work which can include a demonstration of some of the

gadgets from our Resource Centre. These gadgets are a great help to people living with sight loss and a good insight into what we can offer.

We do not charge for this service but are happy to receive a donation towards our work.

We would love to hear from you, please contact Ruth to arrange a visit.

01296 487 556

rproudfoot@bucksvision.co.uk



Ruth with
Barbara Cursley,
President of the
Amersham
Rotary Club.



Gift in Wills

Remembering a charity in your Will is one of the most profound ways that you can help them to continue their work. In fact, many smaller charities would not be able to help their beneficiaries without gifts being left by their thoughtful and kind supporters.

BucksVision has limited resources and we are not able to fund widescale campaigns to support our fundraising efforts. Instead, we rely on local people, like you, to support us and remember us.

We were extremely lucky to have been remembered in a number of supporters' Wills in the past. These gifts have enabled us to continue to support people living with sight loss in Buckinghamshire.

If BucksVision has touched your life, or someone you care about, please consider saying thank you by leaving us a gift in your Will.

For more information please contact Ruth on:
[**rproudfoot@bucksvision.co.uk**](mailto:rproudfoot@bucksvision.co.uk)

FoodCycle

FoodCycle is a national charity whose vision is to make food poverty, loneliness and food waste a thing of the past for every community.

They connect communities, reducing loneliness and food poverty – working with thousands of volunteers and surplus food to help everyone who needs them. By creating welcoming spaces for people from all walks of life to meet, eat and have conversations, and by offering a weekly telephone Check-in and Chat, they support people's health and mental wellbeing.

Free Community Meals

There's no voucher or referral system – everyone is warmly welcomed (although children must be accompanied by an adult). So if you would benefit from a hearty vegetarian meal enjoyed in good company just pop along.

Aylesbury

Every Tuesday at 6.00pm from Aylesbury Vineyard Church, The Vineyard Centre, Gatehouse Close HP19 8DN.

aylesbury@foodcycle.org.uk

Milton Keynes

FoodCycle run two community meal services in Milton Keynes.

Wolverton - every Friday at 12.30pm at The Old Bath House, 205 Stratford Road, Wolverton, Milton Keynes, MK12 5RL.

miltonkeyneswolverton@foodcycle.org.uk

Fishermead - every Thursday at 7.00pm at Seventh Day Adventist Church, Veryan Place Fishermead, Milton Keynes, MK6 2SP.

miltonkeynesfishermead@foodcycle.org.uk



Check in and Chat

Check-in and Chat is a chance to have a weekly chinwag with a FoodCycle volunteer. It's free, available to anyone in the UK and you can sign-up whether or not you go to their community meals.

It's a fun and easy chance for people to talk to volunteers once a week, to feel connected to others, and simply share the joy of a good chat – about food, what's going on with each other, or anything else. Their volunteers are also trained to provide signposting information, if you were to require information about other support services in your area.

If you are interested in receiving a weekly call get in touch with them and they will

contact you to arrange a 20-minute call each week which will continue until you tell them you don't want any more calls.

Contact Details

Phone: 020 7729 2775

Email: hello@foodcycle.org.uk

Web: www.foodcycle.org.uk



LEGO® Braille Bricks

Text from RNIB Website

Children use play to explore the world around them and learn in a number of different ways. LEGO® Braille Bricks is a playful tool to teach braille to children with vision impairment, tested and developed by the LEGO Foundation in collaboration with RNIB. It is widely available within education establishments, from local authorities in the UK, and in online shops.

RNIB developed a toolkit to promote the use of bricks as an educational tool; it comprises of LEGO bricks that have been adjusted to correspond to the Unified English Braille alphabet. Each LEGO brick also has a printed letter or character to ensure the tool is inclusive allowing sighted teachers, students and family members to play on equal terms with a child with vision impairment.

A selection of signature LEGO brick colours has been chosen specifically to ensure colour

contrast and allow for a playful learning experience in an inclusive setting.

The toolkit is accompanied by a teaching concept that builds on a learning through play approach, including ideas for socially interactive activities with the bricks.

The aim is for children to start to use touch to identify different dot combinations and learn braille in a fun way.

LEGO® Braille Bricks can be ordered from www.lego.com

"As well as enabling blind children and adults to read and write by touch, braille brings families together to play games, share bedtime stories, label gifts and greetings cards, access recipes and cooking ingredients, speak at family occasions and so much more. Lego Braille Bricks show how learning braille can be a fun, positive and empowering journey shared by all the family." Dave Williams, RNIB Inclusive Design Ambassador.



Energy Doctor Scheme

Letter to Residents from Buckinghamshire Council.

Are you struggling with energy bills? You may be able to get some help. If you are a homeowner or rent your home from a private landlord, you could get free energy saving advice and free energy saving equipment installed in your home through our Energy Doctor scheme.

An Energy Doctor can give you advice and help you by installing free energy saving items to reduce your energy costs and carbon emissions. You could get free: Portable solar generators; Door, window and letterbox draught excluders; Chimney draught excluders; Hot water cylinder Jackets; Reflective radiator panels; Electricity consumption monitors; LED lightbulbs; and Thermometer cards.

They can also give you advice about ways you can reduce your energy costs and support you could get

(including funding and grants) to help you with sustainable energy measures such as insulation.

You could get a free visit from one of our Energy Doctors if:

- you rent the property through a private rental agreement, or own and live in the property;
 - your household has an income of £30,000 or less (before tax), is in receipt of means tested benefits such as Universal Credit and Council Tax support, or a member of your household is disabled;
 - the domestic property you live in has an energy performance certificate (EPC) rating of D, E, F or G, or does not legally require an EPC.
-

If you think you may be eligible for an energy doctor visit please contact Better Housing Better Health:

Phone: 0800 107 0044

Email: bhbh@nef.org.uk

Apply Online: bhbh.org.uk

VIP 2024 Diaries

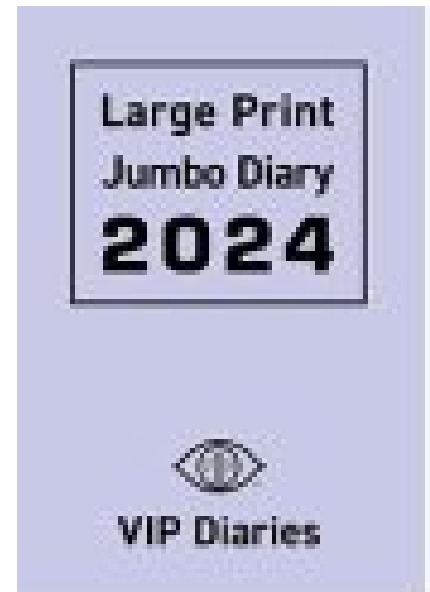
2024 diaries and calendars are now available to order.

Order via BucksVision or directly from VIP diaries

BucksVision - 01296 487 556, reception@bucksvision.co.uk

VIP Diaries - 01539 740 937, sales@vipdiaries.co.uk

A6 Pocket Diary	£6.50
A5 Midi Diary	£8.50
A4 Desk Diary	£10.50
A4 Jumbo Diary	£21.00
A3 Portrait Calendar	£8.00
A3 Landscape Calendar	£8.00



Useful Contacts

BucksVision - 01296 487 556

Bucks Integrated Sensory Services - 01296 479 970

Sensory Advice Resource Centre (MK) - 01908 401 135

RNIB - 0303 123 9999

Macular Society - 0300 3030 111

Glaucoma UK - 01233 648 170

Age UK Buckinghamshire - 01296 431 911

Age UK Milton Keynes - 01908 550 700

Citizens Advice - 0800 144 8848