

Spring 2015

eyeNews



Supporting people living with sight loss in Wiltshire



A warm welcome to our latest newsletter, Eye News. We hope you find it full of useful and interesting information.

We have now settled into our new home and are delighted at the number of visitors who pop in to see us and to have a look at some of our latest assistive technology products and low vision aids.

For those who can't get into Devizes we have a number of monthly community 'drop-ins' and groups where we can demonstrate the latest equipment or offer advice. And, we are always available at the end of the phone.

We have a full programme of activities for 2015 including some open days where you can come along and see a wide range of low vision aids and chat with the suppliers. To make things easier we've included a pull-out section with this newsletter with all the dates you need.

As ever, we value your support and all the things you do to help us. Thank you.

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Get in touch
01380 723682

Memory sticks

We can now offer newsletters and other literature on USB memory sticks. If you would like to receive future editions of the newsletter in this format, please let us know and we will update your details.

GWH opens its door to new eye patients

Good news for local people wanting a referral to the eye clinic at Great Western Hospital (GWH) in Swindon.

For the past year new patients needing ophthalmology services have been referred elsewhere. GWH has been focusing on treating existing and emergency patients.

During 2014 Healthwatch Swindon received comments and views of service users of the ophthalmology service and now local people needing ophthalmology services will again have the option of being referred to the GWH.

Salisbury Hospital Care Card

Salisbury Hospital's Care Card means you get extra support when visiting Salisbury District Hospital. It's available to anyone who has a communication difficulty or a disability. It lets staff know that you need extra support – for example a volunteer to guide you to your appointment. To apply for a card contact the customer Care Team on **0800 374201**

Stepping out in style

Clothing comes in all shapes and sizes, but sometimes that's simply not enough! For people with physical disabilities and the over 65's, finding clothes that reflect a personal style, fit well and are easy to take on or off, can be hard.

To make life easier, Swindon-based charity Dressability provides a low cost clothing adaptation and alteration service to people who need their clothes to fit well, feel comfortable and remain stylish. They can help tailor clothing so that getting dressed or being dressed becomes an everyday routine rather than a daily problem!

They can provide alternative fastening to zips and buttons, widen openings for ease of dressing. In fact they will look to adapt any garment to meet the needs of each individual.

Dressability is happy to help customers living in Swindon and within a 25 mile radius. To find out more call **01793 512878** or email **mail@dressability.org.uk**



News headlines

iCAN Drive

Fancy the ultimate challenge driving a supercar? iCAN are offering a Blind Supercar Driving Experience in Oxfordshire this June. The experience gives people with any level of visual impairment the chance to get behind the wheel of a Supercar and to drive it around a circuit comprising hairpin turns and fast straights!

For more information call **01869 322000** or email **info@icanexperiences.co.uk**



Christmas Raffle

Thank you to everyone who supported our Christmas Hamper Raffle. The raffle raised over £1,000.

And the winners were:

First prize: Ticket Number 79 - Mr Wheeler

Second prize: Ticket Number 288 - Mrs Day

Third prize: Ticket Number 927 - Mr Shockley

The true cost of sight loss

People with sight loss can face at least 25% higher costs for everyday living than those who are fully sighted, according to a new study by Loughborough University for the sight loss charity Thomas Pocklington Trust.

Some of the extra costs include:

- technology, such as accessible mobile phones, specialist software and larger screens
- help around the home, such as a cleaner
- increased transport costs for taxis or travelling further and more regularly for treatment
- healthcare costs, such as extra prescriptions or more complex spectacle prescriptions.

The study clearly shows that the cost of living is substantially more expensive as a result of sight loss. However, it notes that the current benefits system of providing Personal Independence Payments (PIPs) may not take all of these costs into account.

Wiltshire Sight is now a safe place

A safe place is somewhere you can go if anything goes wrong when you are out and about.



Safe places are often public buildings or shops which are open to the public and they have a safe place sticker in their window. Staff there will take time to listen to you, help you make a telephone call and provide you with somewhere to sit.

Any place that is open and showing the safe place logo will be happy to help.

For more information talk to us on **01380 723682** or **info@wiltshiresight.org**

Looking out for Sight

Wiltshire Sight is working to improve the ways in which Care Homes respond to sight loss. In a new project, we've teamed up with sight loss charity Thomas

Pocklington to run workshops with local Care Homes.

Giving Care Home staff a better understanding of sight loss could help to prevent falls and lead to improvements in residents' health and wellbeing.

The new workshop, called 'Looking out for Sight', aims to help Care Home staff to recognise sight loss and to bring in those measures that can make life easier for residents with impaired vision.

The workshop explains the problems faced by people with sight loss and demonstrates simple solutions including the use of readily available resources, e.g. good lighting, Talking Books, a wall clock with 'large print' numbers. Such measures are relatively easy for care homes to introduce and can make a big difference to residents with sight loss, improving their day-to-day lives.

We're able to offer a number of free taster sessions to local Care Homes lasting about 30 minutes.

For more information talk to Maggie Hemmings on **01380 723682** or email **maggie.hemmings@wiltshiresight.org**.

Library services

Wiltshire Sight CD Library

Wiltshire Sight runs a free CD lending library service. We have more than 650 titles covering all genres. So whatever your interest we have books to suit you.

Our library is open every week, usually on a Wednesday morning, where our Volunteer Librarian Alice will deal with book requests.

The library is free to join and easy to use. All you need is a CD player. We'll send you a catalogue of the books we have available and you then let us know which titles you would like. You can ring us at St Lucy's Sight Centre or send us a letter. There is no need to give the full title, just quote the relevant number.

You may order as many as you like but you will receive them one at a time (return one to get one). There is no charge for postage. There may be a waiting list for popular titles.

When you have finished listening to your book, just reverse the address

label in the pouch and post it in a letter box. There is no postage to pay. Please return the CDs promptly as other members may be waiting to receive them.

For more information call us on **01380 723682** and you can talk to Alice directly on a Wednesday morning or leave a message for her.

Changes to the Calibre Library service

For those of you who belong to Calibre Audio Library, there is a change to the service from June 2015. Books on cassette tape will be no longer available. Calibre will be contacting customers of this service directly to discuss other options.

The Calibre Library offers just under 8,000 digital books. These books work on affordable easy-to-use players which are available from Calibre.

For more information contact Calibre directly on **01296 432 339**

eyeListen

New Touch to See Book Club

Living Paintings is setting up a new Touch to See Book Club here at St Lucy's Sight Centre in Devizes. The club aims to bring together sighted and non-sighted people to enjoy fascinating and stimulating subjects.

The Club will meet monthly on the third Thursday of each month from 10.30am to 12.30pm and starts on April 16.

Led by a trained volunteer, the Club will explore interesting, fascinating and fun subjects such as: Monet and van Gogh's love of flowers, Shakespeare's kings and heroines, a walk along the riverbank or the Olympic and Paralympic Games.

Each topic is explored using tactile books with audio guides that describe and discuss the tactile pictures together with a discussion and activities around the topic.

For more information talk to us on **01380 723682** or email **info@wiltshiresight.org**



Zoom

The Zoom Club programme for 2015 is now available. We've lined up some great activities including an Easter Egg Hunt and visit from a fire engine.

The group provides an informal way to talk with us and get advice about play ideas, information and emotional support, as well as the chance to meet other parents while your child takes part in sensory activities that they may not get the chance to do otherwise.

For copies of the Zoom programme call Krista on **01380 723682** or email **info@wiltshiresight.org**

Eye Chat

Our Eye Chat group meets four times a year and it's a coffee morning for people who look after someone with sight loss. It's a friendly social group; we have a go at some fun craft activities and have a good natter over a cup of coffee. New members are always welcome. The club meets at St Lucy's Sight Centre in Devizes and you can find out the dates in our pull out section.

eyeChat

Let's talk Tech

Assistive Technology

In recent years technology for the visually impaired has come on in leaps and bounds and there is now a wide choice of products available on the market.

Here at St Lucy's we have a technology suite equipped with some of the latest products and we have staff trained to show you how they work.

We can demonstrate computer software programmes including: **iZoom, Zoom Text** and **Dolphin Guide**.

We have **Synaptic** easy-to use

smart phone and tablet, with easy to use menus and the ability to change the magnification and colour to suit your needs. You can also have a go on an **Apple MacBook**.

Our tech room is open every day by appointment and we have a dedicated 'tech morning' on the second Thursday of each month where you can just pop in and look at the equipment.

Thanks to **Independent Vision** and **Enhanced Vision**, we have on loan a range of electronic magnifiers and readers:

Why not come along and try one of these?

- | | |
|------------------|--|
| Merlin: | a desktop magnifier for reading and writing confidential documents or private letters, books, magazines or newspapers. |
| Pebble: | a portable electronic magnifier with a high definition camera giving clear, crisp pictures. |
| ReadEasy: | a compact machine that reads print to you! At the touch of a button the ReadEasy translates, within seconds, printed text into clear speech. |
| DaVinci: | a high definition desktop video magnifier that also features text to speech. With the push of a button printed text that is displayed on the screen will be read aloud. The camera can rotate for distance viewing and for self-viewing. |

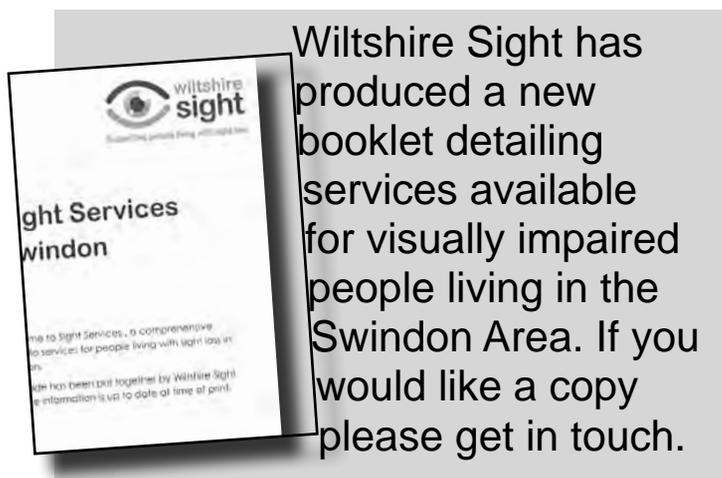
Free training on Dolphin Guide

Computers don't have to be complicated! Dolphin Guide is simple talking computing for people who are blind or partially sighted. Guide is easy to learn and the package includes everything you'll need to get started. Guide is ideal for anyone who wants to:

- Email friends and family:
- Read their own post
- Surf the web
- Play computer games and more.

If you'd like a half an hour taster session with Guide we can offer you a one-to-one training session at our Sight Centre in Devizes. We can show you the basics to get you started.

If you'd like to book a training session, call us on **01380 723682**



Out and about

Wiltshire Sight project worker, Sean Ford, has been testing the Trekker Breeze when he's out and about visiting people in the Swindon area. Sean is visually impaired and uses the Breeze to help him get from place to place.

The Trekker Breeze is a hand held GPS system for people with a sight impairment. About the same size as a TV remote control, Breeze verbally announces names of streets, crossings and landmarks as you walk. All you have to do is press a button and Breeze tells you your location on the spot.

If you'd like more information about using a Trekker Breeze call us on **01380 723682**



Spotlight on Swindon

Services in Swindon

Sean Ford, our project worker for Swindon, is setting up new services. Each month he runs an Eye Contact Group at Wroughton Library where more than 20 people come along to discuss issues around sight loss. Sean has a wealth of experience and is well known in the town.

New for 2015

Starting in May, a new Eye Contact Group for central Swindon. The group will meet in the Community Room at the Tesco Extra Store on Ocotal Way on the second Wednesday of each month from 10.30am to 12 noon and the first date is 13 May. Sean will cover a range of topics relating to sight loss as well. If you are interested in coming along get in touch.

Eye Can Workshop - Swindon

For anyone who wants a more in depth insight into living with sight loss join our four-session course in Swindon this April. Sean Ford will share his experience of living with sight loss and you will explore some of the benefits, services and resources available to you.

For more information on this workshop call us on **01380 723682**

Workshop info:

April 8, 15, 22 and 29

10.30am to 12 noon

Venue Tesco Community Room,
Tesco Extra Ocotal Way,
Swindon SN1 2EH

Lucy Lotto

Thanks to everyone who continues to support our monthly lottery. It costs only £2 a month and the monthly prize draw is around £60. The more members we have the bigger the prize fund. To join give us a call.

Latest winners:

Nov: **293**; Dec: **259**; Jan: **111**; Feb: **139**.



Volunteers are very much valued in the work we do at Wiltshire Sight and without their help we would not have the skills and capacity to do as much as we do.

We have a band of dedicated volunteers who help us in the office, with fundraising and activities.

Focus on Tim

For graphic designer Tim Varley, volunteering has proved to be of huge benefit. He has been volunteering at Wiltshire Sight for the past four years.

Tim's background and experience is in graphic design – a skill that most small charities are unable to afford.

“Over the past four years I've worked on a number of projects including the new website, the charity name change, newsletters and communications. I've designed a whole range of leaflets, posters, logos, graphics for the website and other things.

“Volunteering is a big part of my life and I look forward to working with the team on a Tuesday and really feel part of the family. I can keep my skills up-to-date and develop them. And it also helped me with my confidence.”

Ways to support Wiltshire Sight

There are many different ways you can support Wiltshire Sight.

You could . . .

Nominate us at your place of work to be a charity of the year

Ask us to do a talk at your club or group

Leave a gift to Wiltshire Sight in your Will

Volunteer for Wiltshire Sight

Follow us on Twitter; like our Facebook page

Nominate us as your choice for community funds at your local store

Why not . . .

Put together a small hamper for us to raffle

Ask your local stores, hairdressers, opticians, solicitor to have a Pink Robot collection box

Take part in a challenge – get sponsored!

Hold a tea party or dinner party for us

Set up a regular direct debit

Take part in Lucy Lotto.



DOLPHIN

Simple talking computing for people with sight loss



Dolphin Guide

New to computers?
Guide's simple talking
menus are ideal for
people with sight loss.
Send emails, browse
the web, & much more.

SPEECH



- ✓ Available on a laptop, tablet or desktop. From **£695**.
- ✓ Got a computer? Just add Guide for only **£495**.

DolphinGuide.com

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Eye Can Information Day - 8 April



Join us at the Guildhall in Salisbury for a sight loss information day.

We've teamed up with the major suppliers of low vision aids and assistive technology to showcase all kinds of resources that are available to visually impaired people.

There will be range of trade stands hosting the latest in technology and daily living aids. You'll also get a chance to talk to some of the local organisations who can offer information and support.

The event is free and is open to all members of the public. So if you fancy having a go on a tablet or trying out a reading machine or just want to see the latest technology in action do come along.



2015 Show Date
Sunday 21st June
10am - 5pm



Don't forget the 10th Charity Dog Show and Summer Fair will take place at Bowood on 21 June. The event is open to the public from 10am to 5pm.

Hosted by our president Lady Lansdowne to support her charities - it's a great day out for the whole family. We'll be there running the dog show, so do pop along and say hello!

If you would like to help out as a volunteer we'd love to see you there - just get in touch.