



# Newsletter

## Autumn 2019



Volunteer Thank You Lunch 2019



**INVESTORS  
IN PEOPLE**

## A WORD FROM MIRIAM WRIGHT

Hello once again and welcome to our 2019 autumn newsletter.

In our last newsletter we included an article about the Flintshire Stakeholder Event and I am pleased to be able to say that as I write this we are in the run up to our Chester Stakeholder Event. This is the third we have run in 12 months. There is a twofold purpose to these events firstly we invite professionals and decision makers to attend giving them the opportunity listen to people with a vision impairment talking about the challenges of life with sight loss, making them aware of adjustments and services that best support people to maintain their independence.

Equally important is the opportunity for us to listen to your views about Vision Support services. We have also spent the last 12 months conducting focus groups for specific projects and satisfaction surveys for all our services.

To date this work has been very successful and I would like to thank everyone who has taken the time and trouble to attend. We have been able to put together a useful body of information. Just knowing what is important to our service users is invaluable it means that we can prioritise which services to maintain, define what to improve and develop and to know what the gaps in services might be.

At a recent planning day the Board discussed the feedback on issues that you have told us matter to you, such as how we communicate with you, how we ensure that information is up to date and accessible when people most need it, the increasing demand for support around technology and digital inclusion and the barriers to inclusion in social groups and activities.

We will be running further events and focus groups over the coming months so please keep talking to us. Our AGM will be in December, details will be circulated closer to the time, why not come along and learn more about our plans for the future. I look forward to speaking to as many of you as possible at all of our events.

Many thanks for your continued support.

# HAPPY NEWS FROM HALTON

Our Halton Activity Group celebrated their very own whirlwind romance and wedding on the 12<sup>th</sup> September 2019. The marriage was between Patricia Williams and Roy Cosgrove and was held at Runcorn Town Hall.

The Bride appeared radiant in a cream lace dress complemented by a fitted jacket, pearl shoes and handbag.

Patricia also wore a beautiful fascinator especially created for the day, and a wrist corsage of peach roses. The Groom, Roy, looked very smart in his suit complemented by a big smile and looked very proud. The happy couple honeymooned on a Canary Islands Cruise. We all send them our congratulations.



The couple met when they joined the club aka “Hilary's Club”, which is held at the Mencap Building on Boston Avenue, Runcon which meets Tuesday lunch time every week.

# CHESHIRE OPEN VICTORY

This Summer the Victorious Walled City VI Bowlers returned home with the Cheshire Open VI Crown Green Bowling trophy.

The Tournament was hosted at Macclesfield, between a team from Wrexham, Macclesfield and Chester. The Trophy was provided by Vision Support.

Chairman Howel Lloyd received the Cup on behalf of the Walled City VI Bowlers, from the Macclesfield Councillor, who said that he was very pleased that Chester had won, as he used to live in this area.

A Buffet was provided by East Cheshire VI Society, and was very well received.

The Cup is now on display at the Parish community centre, Chester. As this is an open tournament, it is hoped that more teams will enter next year.

Founder member Chris Duggan, attended with his Guide Dog Inca, and he said that he thoroughly enjoyed the day.

Bowls is due to start back up in April and if you'd be interested in joining the bowls team next year please call 01244 381515 and speak to Jo.



## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

### Alton Murphy Low Vision Information Day

Caroline from Alton Murphy will be coming to the Prestatyn Sight Loss Centre on **Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> November** to talk about Low Vision Assessments.



We have a couple of Low Vision Solutions Consultation days coming up with **Enhanced Vision** who will be visiting the Chester Vision Centre in the Bluecoat on **Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> November** and the Wrexham Centre on **Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> February** by appointment only please call 08080 90 80 90 to book your place.



### Christmas Coffee and Cake Morning



The Prestatyn Sight Loss Centre will be holding a Christmas Coffee and Cake morning on **Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> December** from 11am till 2pm come along for a drink and a slice of cake and join us in getting into the Christmas spirit!

**Oxsight** will be coming to demonstrate their smart glasses at the Chester Vision Centre in the Bluecoat on the **13th of February**.



## A FOND FAREWELL



It is with great sadness we say good bye to Derek Hough. Derek has been with us for quite a number of years and has been involved in a variety of differing roles within Vision Support.

His final role was to manage services across Halton and Cheshire with the odd foray into N. Wales to help out when needed.

My favourite memory is one year we had a Secret Santa, Derek purchased a frame and included a picture of himself – Miriam Wright, CEO was the lucky recipient of this marvellous festive gift!

Derek's a great chap, he never minded what he did and was always happy to help out service users, staff and anybody in general. He had an excellent sense of humour and a fairly philosophical view on life.

Derek has now retired to spend more time with his grandchildren, while he will be greatly missed at Vision Support, we know his grandchildren will benefit from spending more time with their fabulous grandfather.

## CONGRATULATIONS!

We are excited to announce that Debbie has had her baby! Her beautiful baby boy arrived in August, mum and baby are happy and well. I know you will all join us in congratulating Debbie and saying welcome to Toby.

## THE TUESDAY GROUP

Sadly the Tuesday Group said goodbye to Sue Thomas and Phil Parry this summer, who have both been supporting the group for many years. Sue was the founder of the group over ten years ago and did a lot of the organisation of the group, with Phil as the Treasurer. They have also been supported by three other volunteers. The group has ten members who participate in quizzes, art, guest speakers and go on outings. Recently they have been on a boat cruise down the River Dee and been to a Falconry Display at Chester Cathedral.

We would like to thank Phil and Sue for their hard work over the years and wish them all the best for the future!

'I've been a volunteer for just over five years and I can truly say it has all been very enjoyable and really worth the time and effort involved. Helping other people have a good time is rewarding. And I've been to places I would not have thought about, – many of local attractions in Cheshire, even been to Court – as an observer of course. I can recommend volunteering, it's good for the soul.' *By Phil Parry.*

If you would like any further information about the Tuesday Group or would like to consider volunteering with them, please contact the Chester Office on 01244 381515.



# COMMUNITY ROADSHOW

As you may recall from our Spring Newsletter, we are raising funds to replace our old Mobile Information Units with new vehicles.

Unfortunately earlier this year both of our old vehicles had to be taken off the road due to overwhelming mechanical problems, however, we have managed to raise enough to purchase one replacement vehicle and our new Community Roadshow is on the road!

Statistics show that as many as 2 out of 3 people with sight loss are not receiving any support. We need to reach as many of these people as possible and we can't do it all by ourselves. Our aim is to engage with local communities across the region raising awareness of the challenges faced by people with vision impairment.

If you would like to donate via Just Giving please visit <https://www.justgiving.com/visionsupport> or if you would like more information on how to donate online or otherwise please call 01244 381515.



# HOME VISITORS IN CHESHIRE



It's always nice to get an update from our Home Visitors who cover the Cheshire area.

The piece below is from Julie who speaks about some of the things she does on her visits.

“I have been visiting Anki for 6 or 7 years now. She likes to go out for short walks around her local area. Recently, we went to Parkgate where I took this photo and we stopped for a coffee. She tells me that she really enjoys my visits, and we always manage to get out even if it's just to the park nearby.” - *Julie*

We have a team of Home Visitors who go out to visit people with a vision impairment and assist individuals with daily living tasks such as reading mail and sorting household bills.

This service is available to anyone with a vision impairment in the Chester, Ellesmere Port and Vale Royal areas. Service Users can refer themselves for this service or referrals can be made by family members or friends with the service user's permission. Please contact us on 01244 381515 if you would like to request a home visit.

# Halton News

One of our life long VS members and supporter/volunteer Mrs Doreen Johnson of Runcorn, unfortunately, had a fall and broke her ankle in two places and at the same time suffered a stroke. Well that was in May; with her strength and determination Doreen is making good progress in her fight back to health and independence. We all wish her a speedy recovery. Her daughter Sandra has been able to continue to live independently with a few new gadgets and skills and the support of family and VS friends.

For our VS service users and friends just a reminder of our change of premises and our joined up service with Halton Sensory Services. A combined force of VS, DRC (Deaf Resources Centre) and Halton Rehabilitation Workers.



We are now located in 126 Widnes Road, Widnes, WA8 6AX.  
Telephone 0151 511 8801.

Open hours are 10am – 3.30pm. Monday – Friday.

We are available for all your Vision requirements i.e. magnifiers, task lights, talking watches, talking alarm clocks etc. We have access to equipment that will allow you to maintain your independence.

On Monday, Tuesday and Thursday we run an IT club for all your Tech problems with PC Desktop, Laptop, Tablets – iPad/Android & Smartphones. We enable you to use magnification, talkback and voice recognition. We also demonstrate the latest in Text to Speech devices.

# Halton News

We also have an activity club which meets Tuesday 11.00am-1.00pm in Runcorn. When they are not out and about on coach trips they hold quizzes, have speakers on interesting subjects and information among other activities. It is a very successful social group and the members recommend it highly. Hilary Kay, John Rigby and Lou Childs are the founder members and voluntarily organise all the events.

If you would like to volunteer please contact the Halton Office on 0151 511 8801 for further information.

Thursday mornings at Halton Sensory Services Centre Braille is taught to a group. If you are interested in learning Braille please contact Paddy Toner 0151 511 8801.

If you have any queries or concerns for yourself or a relative please pop in and we will be happy to help.

## Deafblind Awareness

Vision Support arranged for the provision of deafblind awareness training for all of its staff.

An external specialist trainer provided general awareness training, to make staff aware of issues relating to how a person with combined hearing and sight loss communicates, accesses information and mobilises.

Congratulations to six members of staff who successfully completed their Level 2 Communicator Guide Training, and are now qualified to act as communicator guides.



## CONWY COUNCIL ACTION PLAN

Conwy Council have a sensory impairment action plan that Vision Support staff Jason and Moz are involved with in their roles for the council as Rehabilitation Officers as part of the sensory team.

As part of the sensory impairment action plan team they invited members of the Vision Support Conwy Sight Loss Group, to visit the new Conwy Council offices at Coed Pella in Colwyn Bay to work with them on reviewing its accessibility in public and private areas.

Their findings have now been added to the Conwy Council Sensory Impairment Action Plan to improve accessibility.

In addition to reviewing the buildings accessibility we were asked to deliver sensory impairment training as part of Conwy Councils

Corporate training plan to staff across all departments, the training we have provided has been well received with great feedback from attendee's, raising awareness of the impact of sensory impairment. As well as delivering sensory impairment training we also offer role specific training, and were asked to provide training for the reception staff at the Coed Pella office to include sighted guiding and description skills as part of reception staff induction training to support people with sight loss.

## CHEESE TASTING WITH THE RHYL VISIONAIRES

The Little Cheesemonger from Rhuddlan came and hosted a cheese tasting session at our Rhyl Visionaires group last month which went down a treat! Our social clubs (which you can find the full list of towards the back of the newsletter) have lots of different activities so please do get in touch if you would like to know what we have coming up! If you get a chance to pop into The Little Cheesemongers yourself we recommend the Brie de Meaux!



## VOLUNTEER AWARDS



Congratulations to our Wrexham volunteer Adam Flavell who received his 5 year long service award from AVOW on 29th June 2019.

Adam volunteers in both the Wrexham Resource Centre and with the Wrexham Visionaires social group.

We would like to thank Adam for the time that he has given to us here at Vision Support.

## VI Volunteer Mentoring Scheme

Our “VI Volunteer Mentoring Scheme”, which supports people with vision impairment to enter volunteering, further learning or employment, is drawing to a close on December 31st this year.

The project, which runs in Flintshire and Wrexham, provides skills and confidence based workshops and training to individuals over the age of 25 with vision impairment who are hoping to become more actively involved in their communities.

Funded by the Welsh European Funding Office’s “Active Inclusion” fund in association with WCVA, this project has been a great opportunity to help our service users to increase their independence and reduce feelings of isolation.

We would like to say a big thank you to the many organisations who have helped to publicise this project. We would also like to congratulate everyone who has taken part in the scheme, many of whom have made great strides since the start of the project.

## SOCIAL GROUPS IN CHESHIRE

**Tuesday Club** – Meets alternate Tuesday mornings 10.30 - 12.30pm at Head Office, Chester. Call 01244 381515 for more information.

**Halton Activities Group** – Meets Tuesday mornings 11.00 - 1.00pm at The Mencap Centre, The Laburnum Grove, Runcorn. Call 01928 582946 for more information.

**Northwich Society for the Blind** – Meets first Wednesday each month 2.00 - 4.00pm at Castle Community Centre on Barbers Lane.

**Hazlemere Group** – Meets first Friday each month 10.30 - 12.30pm at Hazlemere Extra Care Development, Hambleton Way.

**Crown Green Bowlers** – Meets every Thursday 11.00 - 1.00pm at St Werburgh's Parish Centre, Brook Street, Chester, CH1 3DZ. Sighted Volunteers required and no experience necessary.

**Sandbach Group** - Meets every Monday at Oakdene Court, Belle Vue Terrace, Sandbach, 10 am to 12 noon.

**Audio Described Cinema Group** – Monthly screening at The StoryHouse in Chester, 10.00 – 12.00, exact date varies.

**Swimming Group** - Meets every Monday at Chester City Baths, Union Street, Chester CH1 1QP they meet at 9.45 am for a 10 am to 11am swim.

## SOCIAL & CAMPAIGNING GROUPS IN NORTH WALES

**Rhyl Visionaires** – Meets on the last Monday of every month 11.00 – 12.30 p.m. at Rhyl Library.

**Prestatyn Visionaires** – Meets on the first Wednesday of each month. 10.00 – 12.00 noon. Nant Hall Church, Prestatyn.

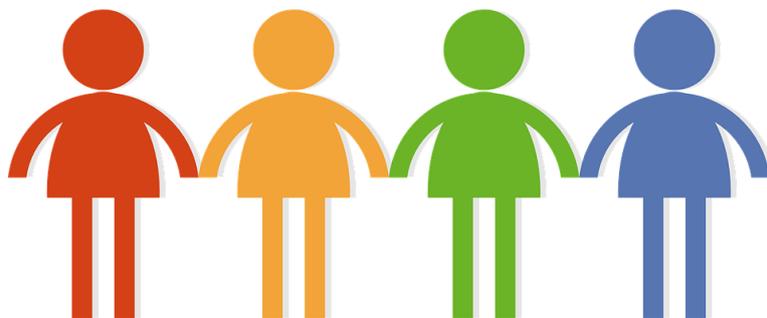
**Wrexham Visionaires** – Meets on the first Thursday of each month. 11.00 – 1.00 p.m. at AVOW, Wrexham.

**Conwy Sight Loss Group** – Meets on the first Thursday of each month 11.00 – 1.00 p.m. The Grand Hotel, Happy Valley Road, Llandudno, LL30 2LR.

**VI Voices Denbighshire** – Meets on the 2nd Monday every other month 2.00 – 4.00 p.m. Prestatyn Library. Call 01745 472558 for details.

**VI Voices Wrexham** – Meets on the third Monday every other month 2.00 – 4.00 p.m AVOW. Please call 01745 472558 for details.

**Socialise (18 to 55)** – Meets first Saturday of the month 1.00 - 4.00pm. Please contact 01244 381515 for venue information.



# CONTACT INFORMATION

## Chester Head Office

Units 1 & 2 The Ropeworks  
Whipcord Lane, Chester, CH1 4DZ  
01244 381515

## Halton Sensory Services Centre

126 Widnes Road,  
Widnes,  
WA8 6AX  
0151 5118801

## Prestatyn Sight Loss Centre

38 High Street, Prestatyn, LL19 9BB  
01745 472558  
Monday—Thursday  
10:00am-3:00pm

## Wrexham Resource Centre

AVOW Ty, 21 Egerton Street  
Wrexham, LL11 1ND  
01978 318813

## Bluecoat Vision Centre

Upper Northgate Street  
Chester, CH1 4EE  
01244 341885  
Monday—Wednesday  
10:00am-3:00pm

## Vision Support Open Line

01244 478910

[information@visionsupport.org.uk](mailto:information@visionsupport.org.uk)

[www.visionsupport.org.uk](http://www.visionsupport.org.uk)

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