

Welcome to the April 2025
Vision Support newsletter,
covering:

Halton 0151 5117260

Chester 01244 478910

North East Wales 01244 381515



A big hello from all of us at Vision Support! We have an important update this month about the **Community Information Service** and we've taken some time in this edition to refresh everyone about some of the great **groups, events and taster sessions** that we have coming up too. Please note a full list of our events are on the Vision Support website www.visionsupport.org.uk under events calendar and you are always welcome to give us a call to find out what's going on in your area!

Fundraising

We are pleased to announce that our most recent fundraising effort raised **£2222!** A huge thank you to every runner, donor, volunteer, and cheerleader who made it all happen. We're looking for more runners to join us at the **Chester Half Marathon on the 18th May** and the **Chester Marathon/Metric Marathon on the 5th October** if you'd like to get involved! Running not your thing? How about a **skydive?** On **Saturday 12th July at 12pm or Saturday 16th August at 2pm.** For full details visit the fundraising section on our website or give our fundraiser **Stef a call on 07821 649 066.**

Important Service Update

We are today announcing, with deep sadness, the closure of our **Community Information Service**. For over 20 years, this service has been a vital part of our work, helping us reach the members of our community that weren't able to visit our resource centres. It has been incredibly impactful on so many people in the communities we serve, upon the staff in Vision Support and beyond. Its closure marks the end of a chapter we are incredibly proud of, and one that has laid the path for other services going forward.

This difficult decision was not taken lightly. We explored every possible alternative to continue the service, but in the absence of sustainable funding and our service users now having better access to information online, we must now focus our resources on other core areas where we can continue to make the greatest difference. For our service users who cannot easily get to our resource centres or join our services, we will still come to you, so please do not hesitate to get in touch.

As part of this transition, we are deeply saddened to confirm that one of our team members has been made redundant. Graham has been an integral part of Vision Support for nearly a decade, bringing dedication, compassion, and skill to his role. Caerwyn, who retired last year, also dedicated over 20 years to the work of Vision Support and we are immensely grateful for their contributions and the lasting legacy they leave behind. (**Continued overleaf**)

While this is a moment of reflection and sadness, we remain committed to our mission and will continue working with our partners, supporters, and the community to deliver high-quality person-centred, impactful services where they are needed most.

We would like to thank everyone — our staff, volunteers, funders, and service users — who have supported the Community Information Service over the years. Your belief in our work has made a lasting difference.

Virtual Digital Skills Forum

Taking place on the final Wednesday of every other month, you can join our virtual tech forum either online via Microsoft Teams or via telephone. In each session, we look at a different topics. Such as using a screen reader or staying safe online. These forums are a great way to broaden your tech knowledge (open to anyone across the areas.) Give us a call if you'd like to attend or email information@visionsupport.org.uk

Chester Quiz Night

We will be hosting a Quiz Night on **Thursday 12th June** at the **Ring O' Bells in Christleton** and we'd love it if you could come along! This is the first Quiz Night we've put on and we're looking forward to a fun evening bringing people together for a bit of friendly competition.

Starting at **7pm**, and it's just **£5 per person**. Expect a fun evening of brain-teasers and good company. Interested? Call Ella at the Ring O' Bells on **01244 335422** to book your table.

What's going on in Halton

What We've Been Up To

In March we held our first **golf taster session** where 16 people got involved. Everyone's really been enjoying our new **Monday Morning Meet Ups** in **The Route café** next door to Halton Sensory Services , they are becoming more and more popular and in the coming months we will have a spotlight on various topics. We meet on the **last Monday of every month between 11am to 12.30pm.**

Dawn who is our **Community Engagement Coordinator**, along with Lyn from HSS, delivered a presentation to 120 non-clinical staff for the GP surgeries from across Halton about the importance of communication for people who are living with sensory loss.

Tuesday Group

Our **Tuesday group** has enjoyed birthday celebrations, boccia and catching up. They have also had a taster session from the Reader organisation. Abi came along to read aloud some texts where the group had the opportunity to discuss the meaning as well as talk about their own experiences of kindness. This group meets every Tuesday at **Wixton Drive Runcorn at 11am till 1pm.**

Tea and Tech

Held at the Halton Sensory Services office in Widnes and taking place every other month, this event is a drop-in session for anyone who has questions about using digital technology or making your own devices accessible.

Community Engagement

We will be at the following venues and events on these upcoming dates if you'd like to come and talk to us!

Community Day at **Runcorn Linnets** on Saturday 10th May from 12pm to 4pm.

Sir Captain John Moore Building Halton Hospital on Tuesday 12th August from 10.30am 13.30pm.

Warrington Hospital Appleton Wing Tuesday 14th October from 12pm to 3pm with Halton Sensory Services.

Coming Soon

Tie-dye session and Gardening Club. May Monthly Social. Dates TBC. Call our Halton office for more details on **0151 5117260**.

What's going on in Cheshire

Morning Brew Crew

We meet on the second Wednesday of the month from 11.30am to 12.30pm at the new venue - Wesley Methodist Church Cafe, St. John St, Chester, CH1 1DA.

Digital Skills Groups and Forums

Cheshire Drop-In Sessions - these sessions are held at the Storyhouse in Chester once every quarter. Drop-in sessions, offer a chance to bring along your device and have your digital technology questions answered.

Cheshire Tech Social - also taking place quarterly at the Storyhouse. This is a social group intended specifically for those who have an interest in accessible technology. The group offers a chance to connect with others while sharing tech knowledge.

What's going on in Cheshire

New Group! Northwich VI Swimming Group

Introductory Tour on 23rd April, 3-4pm at Brio Leisure Centre, Northwich Memorial Court. It will be an opportunity to meet Brio staff and become more familiar with the centre and the facilities. There will be a staff member from Vision Support attending the sessions to meet and greet you! These weekly sessions start on **Wednesday 30th April 3-4pm**. Cost varies depending on membership.

Narrowboat Trip

Tuesday 20th May travelling from Christleton (Cheshire Cat) to Beeston. It is a leisurely cruise along the Chester Canal, with fantastic crew members and volunteers joining us. There will be opportunity for a lunch stop at the Shady Pub. Places are limited so they will be allocated on a first come first served basis. Please note that priority will also be given to those who haven't been on this trip previously.

Taster VI Tennis Sessions

Have you always wanted to learn to play tennis or wanting to keep fit and make new friends? Come and join us for some fun taster sessions led by an LTA accredited coach. On **3rd June- 2.30-3.30pm, 10th June- 10.00-11.00am, 17th and 24th June- 2.30-3.30pm**.

The coaching sessions will take place on the all weather outdoor courts at **Glan Aber Tennis Club**, Westminster Park, Hough Green, Chester, CH4 8JQ.

Call **01244 478910** for details of our Chester groups.

What's going on in Wales

VI Voices North-East Wales – Make a Difference!

Are you vision impaired and living in North-East Wales? Want your voice heard on local issues? Join VI Voices — a group of passionate individuals speaking up for a more inclusive society. You can get involved as much or as little as you like. Email us for more details at information@visionsupport.org.uk

Conwy Wellbeing Walks

Members of the Conwy Sight Loss Group have been participating in some Wellbeing Walks! The sun has shone on us as we have walked along different sections of the coastal path! So far walks have been shorter, but we are hoping to do some longer ones as we head into the warmer weather.

Wrexham

Wrexham Cycling Sessions

Our Vision Sport project is continuing with more cycling sessions at Pedal Power in Wrexham. We have been lucky to have lovely weather so far, and everyone has enjoyed themselves! Look out for more activity sessions over the summer!

Wrexham Visionaires: Meet the first Thursday Each month, 11am to 1pm at the Wrexham Methodist Church, 37 Regent St, Wrexham.

Ladies Who Lunch: 12 noon at Elihu Yale Wetherspoons, Regent Street, Wrexham.

Flintshire

Mold Visionaires: Meeting for a coffee and catch up on the Third Monday each month, 12:30pm to 2pm at Caffi Isa, Mynydd Isa.

11th June: Singing for Joy Session with Theatre Clwyd, 11am to 12.30pm at the Daniel Owen Centre, Mold.

Denbighshire

Prestatyn Visionaires: Meet on the first Wednesday each month, 10am to 12noon at the English Presbyterian Church of Wales, Nant Hall Rd, Prestatyn.

Rhyl Visionaires: Meet on the Fourth Wednesday each month 11am to 1pm at the ASK Centre, Rhyl.

Conwy

Conwy Sight Loss Group: meet on the first Wednesday each month, 1pm to 3pm at the Mostyn Gallery, Llandudno. The group also enjoys a monthly coffee catch up, virtual catch up and have begun going on some wellbeing walks.

Penmaenmawr Visionaires: Meet monthly on the first Monday each month, 10am to 12:30pm at the Penmaenmawr Library.

Men's Time To Talk: Kinmel Bay Library. Hosted by Gemma, our counselling and wellbeing lead. A friendly space for men to share their experiences. (booking required)

Call **01244 381515** for details about our groups in Wales.

For more information on any groups please do get in touch through the phone numbers on the front page!

A Chat with Helen – Making Sense of the Benefits Changes

Our Welfare Rights Officer, Helen, recently sat down with Nia to chat about the latest benefit changes. They discuss how these changes could impact people with sight loss, and what support is available to help make sense of it all.

In the blog, you'll find out:

- What the proposed PIP changes could mean and when they might happen
- What's happening with LCWRA and Universal Credit

Read the full blog here: :<https://www.visionsupport.org.uk/benefits-changes/> (*If you're feeling unsure about benefits, this is a great place to start.*)

Whether it's a change in your benefit, a confusing letter, or just a feeling that something isn't quite right, we're here to help. Even if you've been told "you probably won't get it" — let's check—you could be entitled to more than you think!

No question is too small, and no concern is silly. If you're unsure, just reach out — we'll work through it together

Please don't hesitate to call our head office on **01244 381515** or email our team on information@visionsupport.org.uk.

Help Us Improve Our Newsletter!

We're always looking for ways to make our newsletter more useful and enjoyable for you. Let us know what kind of content you'd like to see more of, and how you'd prefer the newsletter to look and feel. Share your suggestions by calling **01244 381515** or emailing information@visionsupport.org.uk As a thank you, all feedback will be entered into a prize draw for a chance to win a **£25 gift voucher!**