Introducing the Sunu Band

Using radar and augmented reality, Sunu Band enables people who are blind or visually impaired to walk and travel with confidence. Advanced haptic feedback guides you around any obstacle, and navigation sensors connect you to the world that’s around you.

It uses sonar or echolocation to detect objects up to 16 feet or 5.5 metres away. Then haptic vibration feedback informs how close (or far away) you are to obstacles.

Features and Benefits

Sonar Sensor
Guides your way around obstacles, so that you can walk with confidence.

Smartwatch
Tell time with vibrations and set discreet vibratory alarms with the app.

Mobile App
Update, customize and get new features and apps that fit your active lifestyle.

More sensors
Get motivated and be more active with our activity tracker.

Compass & Navigation
Know your way, explore new places and get directions to where you want to go.

For more information:
Call 01604 798070 and select Option 1 or Email info@sightandsound.co.uk
I would like to thank all of you who have generously contributed to the Centenary Brick Appeal - we will be going ahead with the new Annexe in Spring 2019. It seems astonishing that this time last year the annexe was not even on the horizon - the first time it was discussed, rather tentatively, was in January 2018 so over the intervening months much has been achieved - the plans drawn up, planning permission granted, funding applications successfully made, and tenders submitted. With your generous support and that of local organisations, Trusts and Foundations and National and International Funders, we are now able to start this amazing project which is fitting for our Centenary Year. The new annexe will provide us with the light airy and warm accommodation we need to support our beneficiaries and will be used for training, socials and events and will also provide a valuable source of income for the charity. Thank you all for your very generous support which has made this possible. We still need additional funds to fit out the new building so if any of you would like to support this, I would be most grateful.

This coming year we are holding five Living with Sight Loss courses which are led by Heidi and Liam. Feedback from previous attendees has been very helpful and we will in future be including more information on both cooking and ways to exercise and offering more support for partners. Graham has assisted close to 80 people this year with emotional support.

The Mobile Advisory Service has been very well attended and in addition to her usual haunts, Donna has visited many care homes over the past months, where she has been welcomed by staff and residents. Donna is able to provide information for staff so they know where to turn should they have a new resident with sight impairment. In November Donna had a bumper month - over 200 people needing our help.

The Resource Room at Northfield House has assisted a record 150 people in the past month. Increasing numbers are taking up IT support and it is no longer remarkable for those in their 80’s and 90’s to be purchasing smart phones so they can make full use of the built in voice activation and the Apps now available. Activities, socials and events are thriving as is our talking books library service, BWFB radios. Independent talking newspapers across the county, read and distributed each week by volunteers are very much in demand.

A conversation with a funder recently brought me to the grim realisation that having been established as a charity for 100 years is no guarantee of the future - we are however extremely lucky to have many supporters and the need for our services is clearly apparent.
As we begin our Centenary Year, 2019, we can all be proud of Somerset Sight (formerly Somerset Association for the Blind) and our 100 years of support for people in our County who have impaired vision.

In looking back to the end of the First World War, it is difficult to imagine the hardships of our soldiers as they adjusted to civilian life, and especially those who suffered from severe damage to their eyesight in action. Our Association for the Blind was there to recognise and help at such a critical time in our history and for each individual affected.

Over the last century, Somerset Sight has worked as a local and dedicated charity with people who “lack sight but not vision”: but now is the time to reassure our members and friends that we are looking forward to 2019 and beyond and are adapting to the changing needs of our society.

In particular, we are finding new ways of supporting those people who are of working age and school children and their families.

Our staff at Northfield House are confident in advising on the IT advances that are available to help promote independence; they are excited by the variety of activities on offer for socialising and for providing opportunities for visually impaired people, their friends and families; they work tirelessly with other organisations (national and local) to ensure that our service is comprehensive and inclusive. Developments in modern medicine are helping to control but not necessarily to cure eye conditions and we are reaching out to the increasing numbers who need advice and support.

Plans are already in place for special events during 2019 and we hope very much that you will be able to support these. More information will be found in this Magazine. Everything is being organised by our wonderful staff and volunteers who deserve huge thanks from us all.

A very very, happy new year, our Centenary Year. Please join us in celebrating and in our work as we prepare for the next chapter in the history of Somerset Sight - a gem of a charity.
Taunton Soroptimist Swimathon

in its 31st year

Have fun and help raise money for the following local charities in 2019:

Reg. Charity No: 279473
Reg. Charity No: 1050297
Reg. Charity No: 1154472

23rd & 24th February 2019
at Taunton Preparatory School Swimming Pool
All abilities can participate,
with teams of six swimming in relay for one hour

For more details and team entry forms:
Email: taunton.swimathon@outlook.com Phone: 01823 423187
www.sigbi.org/taunton/soroptimist-swimathon

The Swimathon is generously sponsored by:
Looking back over the last 100 years - Somerset Sight 1919-2019

The Inaugural Meeting of the “Somerset County Committee for the Welfare of the Blind” was held in Taunton, on Saturday, 8th February 1919. The Association was then referred to as “The Somerset County Blind Association Committee” at its next meeting on 24th February 1920. It was not until a meeting on 4th November 1920 that the name, “The Somerset County Association for the Blind” was used.

The organisation of the Association was initially through the Rural Deaneries. The Blind Persons Act of 1920 laid on the local authority the obligation to establish registers of the blind.

The Organising Secretary, Miss King remained an ex-officio member of the Association from its inception in 1919 to her retirement in 1946/47. Her work was appropriately recognised by the award of the MBE in 1940. Her own vision was severely impaired and she was a guide-dog user for many years.

The list of committee members and helpers reads like a “Who’s Who” of Somerset. The association was fortunate in the support of the Rt. Rev. Charles de Salis, D.D., Bishop of Taunton, who was President of the Association from 1920 to his death in 1941.

The family connection with the Association was continued when Count Charles de Salis was elected President in 1986 following in the footsteps of Colonel Cecil Mitford-Slade who had been involved in the association for many years, having been President in 1975. Since 1919 the number of visually impaired and blind people registered in Somerset has increased dramatically, from just 350 in 1919, to around 19,000 now at the end of 2018.

Following the example of the Western Counties Regional Association, home teachers were appointed to look into specific training problems encountered by the blind. Social support and advice were also provided, particularly during the war years when help was required with gas masks and blackout precautions.
On 19/9/25 the association transferred £59 received from fundraising at a charity football match and £100 annual subscription received from the National Institute for the Blind into a new account set up to pay for the services of a home teacher to work in East Somerset.

The organisation provided her with a bicycle to make her visits. In 1926 a second home teacher was employed and the association decided to buy this teacher a car (an Austin 7 £167-17-8) in order for her to be able to travel greater distances and reach more people. In the following year another 2 teachers were employed and all 4 of them were each provided with an Austin 7.

Frequent mention is made in early reports of promotion of the British Wireless for the Blind Fund which is still in existence; Somerset Sight is the agent for Somerset.

Activities and socials still run regularly across the County. Although many changes have been made we are committed to providing social opportunities to visually impaired people of all ages and have started working with our families with VI children.

In 2010 we were extremely fortunate to receive funding from the Big Lottery Fund to pay for all running costs for the Mobile Resource Unit for the following five years. This was renewed in 2017 for the newly branded Mobile Advisory Service. Income of the organisation was £19.6s.0d in 1920 compared to the last financial year which was £348,000.

Reviewing the past 100 years of the organisation, it is impossible to over-stress the debt of gratitude we owe to the numerous volunteers who devote so much time and energy into helping blind and visually impaired people in Somerset to continue to live full and independent lives.
**Staff reflections on the Centenary**

Heidi: “I feel extremely grateful to be involved with such an amazing local charity. Having worked for Somerset Sight for over 14 years to be part of its Centenary is simply wonderful! Having a visual impairment and being a recipient of the fantastic support Somerset Sight has offered to me and so many other people over the years, giving back is important and so incredibly valuable. The services offered by Somerset Sight significantly improve the lives of so many. There is nothing more rewarding than to be part of that process.”

Avril: “The fact that Somerset Sight has been going now for a Hundred Years and to actually be involved in something like this amazing Charity is very humbling and a source of great pride!”

Kate: “Every day I speak to people who have been helped by some or all of the services we offer. The last 100 years has seen amazing changes in treatment and resources for the Visually Impaired. Happy 100th Birthday Somerset Sight”.
Sandra: “I love working for a local charity of such long standing and it is amazing to think that we have been around since the end of WWI, currently getting much deserved coverage and celebration. Next year is our turn!”

Michele: “Working at Somerset Sight is very fulfilling, especially as you can really see the difference we all make to people’s lives. With the numbers of visually impaired people increasing every year, the support from Somerset Sight will be here for another hundred years!”

Liam: “When I think of the charity I struggle to imagine the incredible number of people that Somerset Sight has helped in its one hundred years. The fantastic work it has done to help people is truly amazing and I am sure it will continue to grow and support people and their families for the next one hundred years.”

Donna: “The Mobile Advisory Service (MAS) started in 2010 and I have spent 8 busy years travelling around Somerset, taking aids and information to people who can’t get to Taunton. I love meeting new people and being out in the County as the face of Somerset Sight”.

Holly: “I am immensely proud to work for a Charity that has been in existence for 100 years and I can’t wait to celebrate the Centenary with you all next year”.

Sandra: “I love working for a local charity of such long standing and it is amazing to think that we have been around since the end of WWI, currently getting much deserved coverage and celebration. Next year is our turn!”
Centenary Events 2019

Charity Race Day
Wednesday 9th January 2019
11.30am - 4pm

We are thrilled to be holding a Charity Race Day at Taunton Racecourse and invite you to join us for a great day out.

Tickets are £60 to include:
Full Admission to the Race Course, Opportunity to watch the racing and spend the day in our private Hospitality Suite, Race Card, 2 Course Lunch, Table Wine / Soft Drink alternative, Afternoon tea (£10 Supplement).

Swim-a-thon
Saturday 23rd & Sunday 24th February 2019

Taunton Soroptimist sponsored Swim-a-thon. The 31st Year of the Swimathon and they have chosen Somerset Sight as one of the beneficiaries. We have booked all 5 lanes in the pool from 10-11am on Saturday 23rd Feb and are looking for 30 people to swim two lengths each in our teams. Children must be older than 8 at the time of the event. Could you take part?

Improving the Lives of Blind & Visually Impaired People Since 1919

100 YEARS OF SOMERSET SIGHT

12
Coffee Morning Fortnight  
**Monday 1st April - Friday 12th April 2019**

Coffee Morning fortnight - Why not organise a coffee morning at home to raise funds for Somerset Sight? Please get in touch for a coffee morning pack. Alternatively join us at one of the following (All ages welcome):

**Tuesday 2nd April** -  
The Canal Side Centre, Bridgwater  
10am - 12pm

**Friday 5th April** -  
Wanstrow Village Hall  
10am - 12pm

**Monday 8th April** -  
Wells Town Hall  
10am - 12pm

**Tuesday 9th April** -  
Chard Town Hall  
10am - 12pm

**Thursday 11th April** -  
Dunster Tithe Barn  
10am - 12pm

**Friday 12th April** -  
Wellington Baptist Church Hall  
10am - 12pm

Please contact Holly on 01823 366147 or holly.sutton@somersetsight.org.uk for more information

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The Ciderthon  
**Sunday 5th May 2019**  
Long Run Meadow, Taunton.
A half marathon with a difference, a cider taster every mile. Come and join Somerset Sights team and have fun whilst raising money and having a cider or two!

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100k Sponsored Tandem Bike Ride  
**Saturday 1st June 2019**
100k sponsored Tandem ride in Taunton area and BBQ at Somerset Sight HQ. (Shorter routes available and option to do on individual bike). We would love as many service users and families to join in as possible. This will be a fun, active event. Cycling around the Taunton area and out towards the levels, please get in touch to express interest and for more information.

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Country House Car Boot  
**Sunday 8th September 2019**

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Dining in the Dark  
**Friday 6th December 2019**  
Join us for our final Centenary event of the year. A very special Dining in the Dark at Woodlands Castle, Taunton. Tickets £45 to include arrival drink, 2 course meal, live music and disco. Join us to end the year with a bang. More details to follow.
Thank you to everyone who joined us to celebrate 100 years of Somerset Sight and we look forward to celebrating with more of you during 2019.

Hosted by The Lord-Lieutenant and The Bishop of Taunton. It was a lovely evening with speakers including Trustee Paul Fellingham, Max Tidball and Mr Ed Herbert from Musgrove Park Hospital.
Parent support group meetings

We are starting monthly meetings from 10am - 12pm alternating between Tor Leisure in Glastonbury and our Resource Centre in Taunton.

These will be valuable sessions to meet other parents and build a support network, as well as hearing from our speakers.

If there are any suggestions for topics/ speakers please contact Holly.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WHEN</th>
<th>WHERE</th>
<th>WHAT</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>28th Jan</td>
<td>Tor Leisure</td>
<td>Introductory meeting. Learn about Somerset Sight and what we offer and meet other parents. We will bring useful gadgets and info along with us.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25th Feb</td>
<td>Taunton</td>
<td>Heidi Lyon from the Guide Dogs for the Blind Association. Heidi is a Service Delivery Manager for the Children and Young Peoples team and a Habilitation Specialist.</td>
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<tr>
<td>25th March</td>
<td>Tor Leisure</td>
<td>Speaker to be confirmed</td>
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<tr>
<td>29th April</td>
<td>Taunton</td>
<td>Andrea Doyle, Rehab Officer from Adult Sensory Loss Team. Coming to explain the transition from Childrens to Adults services.</td>
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<td>13th May</td>
<td>Tor Leisure</td>
<td>Speaker to be confirmed</td>
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<tr>
<td>24th June</td>
<td>Taunton</td>
<td>Speaker to be confirmed</td>
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A look back at Childrens Activities during 2018

We have had a great year of Children’s activities and are planning a fun packed 2019 for you. A big thank you to Children in Need for funding the activities and making all of this possible.

Some of the things we have done this year are: Frogmary Green Farm, Bowling, Childrens Cooking Workshop, Cinderella Pantomime, Swimming, Cricket day, Horse drawn Barge and Trip to Longleat.
## Mobile Advisory Service

### Mobile Advisory Service dates:
January 2019 - April 2019

### Mendip

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<th>Area</th>
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<tr>
<td>Glastonbury</td>
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### PULL OUT AND KEEP!
## Mobile Advisory Service

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<tr>
<td>Burnham-on-Sea</td>
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<td>Nether Stowey</td>
<td>Weds 13(^{th}) March</td>
<td>St Mary’s Church</td>
<td>1.30pm - 3.30pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>N. Petherton</td>
<td>Friday 22(^{nd}) Feb</td>
<td>Car Park</td>
<td>10.30am - 1.30pm</td>
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## South Somerset

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<tr>
<td>Bruton</td>
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<td>Bugden’s</td>
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<td>Thurs 4(^{th}) April</td>
<td>Bugden’s</td>
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<tr>
<td>Castle Cary</td>
<td>Tues 26(^{th}) Feb</td>
<td>Mill Brooke Car</td>
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<td>Mill Brooke Car</td>
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<td>Chard</td>
<td>Tues 22(^{nd}) Jan</td>
<td>Sainsbury’s Hospital</td>
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<td>Friday 1(^{st}) Feb</td>
<td>Sainsbury’s</td>
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<td>Weds 20(^{th}) March</td>
<td>Sainsbury’s</td>
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<td>Crewkerne</td>
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<td>Henhayes Centre</td>
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<td>Ilminster</td>
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<td>TBC</td>
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<td>Tesco</td>
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<td>Langport</td>
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<td>Mon 25(^{th}) March</td>
<td>Tesco</td>
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<td>Martock</td>
<td>Fri 15(^{th}) March</td>
<td>Moorlands Car Park</td>
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**NEW VENUE**
# Mobile Advisory Service

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Somerton</td>
<td>Weds 16th Jan</td>
<td>Cox’s Yard</td>
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<td>Weds 27th Feb</td>
<td>Cox’s Yard</td>
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<td>Weds 3rd April</td>
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<td>S. Petherton</td>
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<td>TBC</td>
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<td>Yeovil</td>
<td>Thurs 17th Jan</td>
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<td>Weds 24th April</td>
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## Taunton Deane

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<tr>
<td>Wellington</td>
<td>Tues 5th March</td>
<td>ASDA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wiveliscombe</td>
<td>Mon 11th March</td>
<td>Top Car Park</td>
<td>1.30pm - 3.30pm</td>
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**EXCITING NEWS**

**THE MOBILE ADVISORY SERVICE IS NOW VISITING MARTOCK FROM 2019**
### West Somerset

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<th>Area</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Minehead</td>
<td>Mon 21&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt; Jan</td>
<td>Morrisons TBC</td>
<td>10.30am - 3.30pm</td>
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<td>Mon 4&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; Feb</td>
<td>Beach Cafe</td>
<td>10.30am - 12.30pm</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mon 4&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; Feb</td>
<td>Morrisons TBC</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mon 4&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; March</td>
<td>Beach Cafe</td>
<td>10.30am - 12.30pm</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mon 4&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; March</td>
<td>Morrisons TBC</td>
<td>1.30pm - 3.30pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fri 29&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; March</td>
<td>Hospital</td>
<td>10.30am - 1.30pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Thur 11&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; April</td>
<td>Morrisons TBC</td>
<td>10.30am - 3.30pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dulverton</td>
<td>Mon 11&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; March</td>
<td>Hanover Court</td>
<td>10.30am - 12.30pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>Porlock</td>
<td>Mon 18&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; March</td>
<td>Car Park (nr the One Stop Shop)</td>
<td>10.30am - 12.30pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Williton</td>
<td>Fri 8&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; Feb</td>
<td>Hospital</td>
<td>1.30pm - 3.30pm</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mon 18&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; March</td>
<td>Car Park</td>
<td>1.30pm - 3.30pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watchet</td>
<td>Tues 15&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; Jan</td>
<td>Coach Park</td>
<td>10.30am - 3.30pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tues 26&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; March</td>
<td>Coach Park</td>
<td>10.30am - 3.30pm</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Dates may be subject to change if you are making a special journey, please call our office prior to your visit on 01823 333818.
Activities for your diary

Thursday 17th January 2019
Tenpin Bowling in Yeovil

Thursday 21st February 2019
West African Drumming
Taster Session, Northfield House - Taunton.
Mendip All Drummers, a small, friendly group playing mainly West African rhythms on djembes and dunduns.

Wednesday 20th March
The smash hit production of Annie at the Bristol Hippodrome Theatre

Please get in touch with Heidi for more information and to purchase tickets.

Friday 19 July 2019
Waxall Vineyard Tour
A 45 minute tour around the property and explanation of the wine making process finishing off in the Tasting Room where you can sample all the wines they produce. £10 per person and a contribution for transport, yet to be confirmed.

April 2019
Driving Experience Day
Offering individuals a once in a lifetime driving experience.

May 2019
Horse Riding
Experience the feeling of being on a horse whilst riding through our amazing countryside.

June 2019
VI Golf Taster Day
Blind Golf is played strictly to the Royal & Ancient Rules of Golf with the exception that players are allowed to ground their club in a hazard. They may also require the assistance of a sighted caddie or guide.
We are celebrating our success after sweeping the board in our first ever summer leagues, with 3 golds and 2 silver medals.

Members Philip Frounks, Heidi Linegar and Mickey Contreras won gold and Graham Glover and Philip Millington won silver, in their separate divisions.

We are going forward into the 2018 winter league with high expectations. None of this would be possible without the fantastic help and support we receive from Ron Venables and Tony Vickery who are our volunteers each week and the generosity of Sport England who funded the equipment.

In House Volunteers

Apart from our much valued Volunteer Visiting Service, we also rely on volunteers for many other roles within our organisation.

We are fortunate to have fantastic volunteers that assist with various roles including fund raising, administration, the resource centre, reception, and library and driving to name a few roles.

We consider them all to be a valuable part of the Somerset Sight family!

In particular we have recently recruited new volunteers at the eye clinics at both Yeovil and Musgrove hospitals.

These positions help support the ECLOs (Eye Clinic Liaison Officers) and to provide essential information to patients about the support we can offer them.

We are still looking for more hospital volunteers as ideally we would like to cover every eye clinic session to ensure all patients are aware of our services.

Please contact us if you know of anyone who may be interested.
How Emotional Support changed Rob’s life

Rob was referred to Somerset Sights emotional support service at the beginning of September.

He was not leaving his house very often because of the deterioration in his sight, his confidence and independence were low and when he was out and about he was bumping into people, lampposts, a boards etc. which was causing him to feel anxious and frustrated.

Rob was in denial and found his sight loss very debilitating. He wouldn’t accept the use of a white cane as he found it too embarrassing. After working with Graham, Rob built the confidence to go out using a cane and to acknowledge his sight loss.

He was astonished at how people interacted with him and were supportive and helpful.

This renewed his confidence and has helped him to overcome his difficulties and enabled him to go to concerts, gigs and play his guitar which is his passion.

Macular Degeneration Support Groups - 0300 30 30 111

Chard
Meet first Thursday at 2pm - 4pm
Baptist Church, 9 Hollyrood Street,
Chard, TA20 2AH

Exmoor/Dulverton
Meet fourth Thursday
at 2pm - 3.30pm
Exmoor Medical Centre, Oldberry House, Fishers Mead, Dulverton,
TA22 9EN

Frome
Meet third Thursday
at 10.30am - 12pm
Frome Medical Practice, Enos Way,
Frome, BA11 2PH

Taunton
Meet first Monday at 11am - 1pm
Quaker Meeting House, Bath Place,
Taunton, TA1 4EP

Wells
Meet last Friday at 10am - 12pm
The Denning Room, Union Street,
Wells, BA5 2PU

Weston Super Mare
Meet second Tuesday at 2pm - 4pm
The Lauriston Hotel,
6-12 Knightstone Road, Weston,
BS23 2AN

Yeovil
Meet third Thursday
at 1.30pm - 3.30pm
Vicarage Street Methodist Church,
Vicarage Walk, Off Middle Street,
Yeovil, BA20 1JZ
Features

Why a Will is important

• If you die without making a Will, the Rules of Intestacy determine what happens to your estate. This may not be what you want and unmarried partners, step children or charities would not benefit from your estate unless they are named in your Will. If you have no surviving relatives then your estate could even go to the Crown!

• You can name Executors that you trust to carry out the administration of your estate and to give effect to your wishes.

• If you have children that are under eighteen, you can use your Will to appoint Guardians to look after them.

• Making a Will gives you the chance of leaving a legacy to those causes you care about, something which is not always possible to do in your lifetime.

Types of legacies
The following types of legacies (gifts) can be left in your Will:

1. A specific gift - this is a particular identifiable item such as jewellery or property.
2. A pecuniary gift - this is a fixed sum of money which can be linked to the Retail Price Index or Consumer Prices Index to maintain its real value.
3. A Residuary gift - the ‘residue’ is what is left after the payment of all debts, liabilities and testamentary expenses. You can divide the residue between beneficiaries or leave it all to one beneficiary.

Benefit of leaving a gift to charity
For individuals, the current Inheritance Tax threshold is £325,000 and Inheritance Tax is paid at a rate of 40% of anything in excess of the available Tax threshold. If you give away your home to your children (including adopted, foster or stepchildren) or grandchildren, your threshold can increase to £450,000. No Inheritance Tax is payable between married couples and a surviving spouse can transfer any unused threshold to their estate.

There is no Inheritance Tax to pay on gifts to charities. A gift to charity can either be a specific gift, a pecuniary gift or a residuary gift. A gift to charity will either:

• Be taken off the value of your estate before Inheritance Tax is calculated

• Reduce your Inheritance Tax rate to 36% if more than 10% of your estate is left to charity

A gift in your Will enables you to help shape the future and provides income for the charity that can be used to develop new services, or preserve the existing services on which so many people rely each day.

This article was prepared by Bailhache Solicitors, 2 Church Square, Taunton, Somerset TA1 1SA. Please contact Bailhache Solicitors on 01823 35122 if you would like any further information or to book an appointment.
Features

Northfield House Christmas Party

Monday 3rd December we held an afternoon of mulled wine, mince pies and carols at Somerset Sight to celebrate Christmas.

The Northtown Primary School Choir sang some lovely Carols and the guitar group performed for everyone. It was a very festive afternoon and was great to see everyone.

Somerset Sight,
Northfield House,
51 Staplegrove Road,
Taunton, TA1 1DG

Registered Charity Number 1154472

Main telephone number
01823 333818
Website: www.somersetsight.org.uk
Email: admin@somersetsight.org.uk
I am one of the VVS Co-ordinators for Somerset Sight; I would like to tell you all about a lovely gentleman named Tom whom I met when he was referred to Somerset Sight a few years ago.

Tom was a highly intelligent, strong and independently minded man. I first met Tom when he was in his 90s and he had lots of interests that he loved to talk about. However like many others, Tom’s ability to live independently in his own home was deeply affected by his loss of sight through Age Related Macular Degeneration. He also had a number of other health problems.

Tom battled on at home with great support from one of our volunteer visitors over a number of years. I visited Tom one day and he asked me whether she could take him to places such as to his solicitor’s office to make changes to his will.

I said that this would be absolutely fine and then somewhat jokingly said “Don’t forget Somerset Sight will you Tom!” to which he replied “Oh of course you’re a charity aren’t you, thank you for reminding me I certainly will remember you!”

Tom continued to enjoy his volunteer support until he sadly passed away.

I often think of him when I am in his area. We later found out that Tom had left a sum of money to Somerset Sight which, along with other generous donations and legacies has helped us to maintain and build up our services over the years.

If you enjoy and look forward to your volunteer visiting you, as Tom did, and find our charity’s support useful, please consider remembering us. Your family and friends come first of course. As a small charity we can assure you that every penny given to us is very carefully spent and you can witness what we are doing in your community every day.

The generosity of Tom and others like him is essential if we are to continue to support people whose sight loss affects their lives. Referrals are increasing all the time including those for visually impaired children.

If you would like to talk to somebody more about this subject please don’t hesitate to contact your Co-ordinator or Holly Sutton, Fundraising Officer on 01823 366147, thank you.”

Claire Packwood
Volunteer Visitor Co-ordinator
01643 842972
Features

British Wireless For The Blind

The new Opus radio is proving to be popular.

With Bluetooth audio streaming from a smart device, USB recording and playback, Opus also has a large easy-to-read LCD display with zoom function. Its 10 one-touch radio station presets and built-in battery charging means Opus really is more than just a radio.

Anyone who is registered blind or partially sighted, over the age of eight, living in the UK and in current receipt of a means-tested benefit qualifies to receive a set. If you meet the qualifying criteria and think you would benefit from a specially adapted set, please contact Michele for further information.

Cobalt Speechmaster Talking Microwave oven

Being totally blind since I was sixteen I have used a normal microwave for about twenty years and managed very well cooking my morning porridge, a lunch time jacket potato or just reheating some left overs from the night before.

My wife would apply bump ons to various minute and power settings, so I could use the Microwave independently which worked very well. Last year I was given the opportunity to use a talking microwave for the first time. I was very sceptical to start with as I have used normal machines in the past with great success and why change something that was working for me.

I was very quickly impressed with it though. The Microwave came with a couple of CD’s I could listen to, one was the operator’s manual and the other was some recipes to try.

There is a setting for everything which really takes out the guess work which I sometimes found with using my old-style microwave.

I would recommend this product as it really is fantastic, and I wish I had known about it earlier. Liam Harkness
**M’s Story**

I would like to tell you a little bit about a lady called M - no not the one in the Bond movies!

M had a rather nomadic childhood, being born in Lanzhou near Tibet and remembers with fondness the periods she spent in Canada and then China in the Gooling Mountains, where her parents were Missionaries.

M trained as a nurse and with her close friend J they opened a successful hospice known as ‘The Free Home for the Dying’.

With this experience under her belt, J was appointed to set up Hospice work in Somerset and moved to Taunton in 1982.

M came to join the staff once the Hospice was built, now the very well-known St Margaret’s Hospice. M’s friend has supported her over the years as she has always suffered with poor sight, and in fact had to retire early owing to her failing vision - now M has no sight at all.

They have overcome things together and been able to remain independent until very recently, when J started experiencing trouble with back pain. Sadly, they are no longer able to walk into town together or enjoy the nearby parks and footpaths - M is a great lover of nature. M got in touch with Somerset Sight to ask if it would be possible to find a volunteer who would be able to accompany her on local walks for exercise and enjoyment and some errands in town. It didn’t take long to find the right person to visit M and since the first day they met, a good relationship has been developing.

We have been so lucky to have had a beautiful summer this year, so M and her volunteer R, have enjoyed walks to French Weir, Longrun Meadow and the footpath along the river Tone from town. R describes the scenes as they walk along, bringing the walk to life for M with descriptions of the trees, flowers and insects.

M told me that on a recent walk she was continuing in what she described as “blackness” and then heard a sound which she was told was a mallard swimming along close by and then about a Dad walking along with his three young children on their bikes, enjoying the sun and fresh air.

M said that she could immediately picture the scene in her mind’s eye and then felt part of what was going on.
M and J both say how much this means to them, probably more than we might realise. Volunteer R says that she really enjoys being able to guide M and describing what is going on around them and seeing the pleasure this brings.

Sandra Harris,
Volunteer Visitor Co-ordinator.

**Somerset Sight Audio Library**

We are one of the only Charities in the county to provide free talking books to anyone with sight loss.

Our library of almost 2,000 titles is made up of tapes and CDs.

To access the library please contact our friendly volunteer librarians on 01823 333818

**Taunton Deane Audio News**

TDAN has been providing this service for over 30 years.

Normally, news is taken from the Somerset County Gazette and Wellington Weekly News, and is recorded, by one of five teams, on a Thursday or Friday evening for delivery on a Saturday or soon after, depending on the Royal Mail.

This USB stick can be played on a computer, or we will supply, free of charge, a suitable Orb Player on loan. The stick is sent to you in a reusable plastic wallet via Royal Mail, and it has a return **FREEPOST** label to send back the stick for re-recording and re-issue. No stamp is required.

If you are interested in receiving free weekly news via a memory stick, please ring us on 01823 283956
Over the past few months I have been very busy out and about and I have met some lovely people all around my area.

There have been many high spots as I have recently matched up some people with new volunteers and these seem to be going well and they are really enjoying each other’s company.

DW was already matched with a lady and they have become firm friends and she enjoys being taken out in the car and is constantly urging D to “go faster”. They go to garden centres where D is able to describe the plants to her as he pushes her around in her wheelchair and then enjoy a cup of tea together.

I have also introduced D to a gentleman in Bruton and as they have a huge amount in common and started chatting from the very first minute and I just sat there listening to all the amazing reminiscences. D has brought both of his Service users to Northfield House on separate occasions to have a look at all of the aids we have available. Both of these lovely people are in their 90’s and to have D as a visitor has certainly brightened up their lives and they really look forward to seeing him as he does them.

I also introduced a lady volunteer to a gentleman who was very isolated and rarely saw anyone. Their mutual love of animals and the countryside has led to a good friendship and JT enjoys P’s visits. It has given him something to look forward to as they chat about lots of things and take his dogs out and about.

These are just a couple of examples of why the volunteer visitor service works so well and also the mutual enjoyment that both Volunteer and service user enjoy.

Members of Somerset Sight are invited to be part of this exciting new project to create a group of shanty singers here at Northfield House

Under the direction of ship’s captain and lead singer Keith, fun will be on the ships manifest at every session.

Enlist Now Or Miss The Boat.

Keith Woolgar
Meeting others who understand - Heidis update

My role here in 2004 was part time and I was employed as Somerset Association for the Blind’s first Resource Centre Assistant.

Here I am in 2019, working full time managing the Resource Centre, organising activities for adults, providing rehabilitation services, technology support, running regular Living with Sight Loss Courses, coordinating the Emotional Support Service, dealing with all new referrals from professionals, carers and those who refer themselves to us.

The centre prides itself on being a warm and welcoming environment where you can meet others who understand and empathise with you and your loved ones. We endeavour to do our best to assist you with both the practical and emotional needs you may have in a timely manner.

We know technology can be quite scary and daunting to some but we can provide support and training with products such as the Apple iPhone and tablets and the voice activated Amazon Echo.

Of course there is still the need for big button phones, talking time keepers. But isn’t it amazing that you can now ask a High Street device to tell you the time, the weather, to ring your friend, taxi or neighbour without having to negotiate complicated keypads and buttons?

Personally I love the fact that technology has moved on so much that it is now inclusive to all.

As a charity we have developed into offering much more than a ‘shop’. The real difference I’ve observed over the years is just how important having somewhere to turn to in times of difficulty. Whether newly diagnosed or having lived with sight loss for a period of time.

I have the same phone as my sighted friends and we can access the same applications and information. Whereas years ago you could feel left out and different to everyone else, having specialist products.
Looking Back At 2018

Here’s a look back at some of the things we have been up to in 2018!
Here's a look back at some of the things we have been up to in 2018!
Features

Northfield House Craft Group

The craft group at Somerset Sight has been running successfully for many years under the leadership of Ian Lloyd, supported by many dedicated Volunteers.

Unfortunately Ian has decided to retire and so we are looking for a new Volunteer to run the craft group per week in Taunton.

We would all like to thank Ian for all he had done for the craft group and wish him well for his future endeavors.

Yeovil Golf Club

Steve Pike chose us as the Captains Charity of the Year at Yeovil Golf Club last year. They raised a fantastic £5903.91 and Holly visited them to collect the cheque in December.

Skydive for Somerset Sight

Philip Millington collected a certificate from Northfield House for his fantastic achievement, jumping out of an aeroplane to raise funds for Somerset Sight. He raised £592. Thanks Phil for all your support.
### Regular Activities and Social Groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Where</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bridgwater Social Group</td>
<td>Second Wednesday of each month except January, and August</td>
<td>2.30pm-4.30pm</td>
<td>St Francis Church Hall. TA6 4JA</td>
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<td>Chard Social Group</td>
<td>First Thursday of each month except January and August</td>
<td>2.30pm-4.00pm</td>
<td>Methodist Church Hall. TA20 1PT</td>
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<td>Crewkerne Social Group</td>
<td>Second Tuesday of each month</td>
<td>2.30pm-4.30pm</td>
<td>Henhayes Centre. TA18 8DA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mells Social Group</td>
<td>Second Thursday of each month except January, February July and August</td>
<td>2.15pm-4.15pm</td>
<td>Mells Barn BA11 3PN</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minehead Social Group</td>
<td>Second Monday of each Month</td>
<td>2.00pm-4.00pm</td>
<td>Friends Meeting House. TA24 5DJ</td>
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<td>Wellington Social Group</td>
<td>Third Tuesday of each month</td>
<td>2.00pm-4.00pm</td>
<td>W.H.E.R.E. Centre. TA21 8LY</td>
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<tr>
<td>Taunton Drop in Social Group</td>
<td>Every Other Thursday</td>
<td>2.30pm-4.30pm</td>
<td>Somerset Sight. TA1 1DG</td>
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<td>Chard Music Appreciation</td>
<td>Fourth Friday of each month</td>
<td>2.30pm-4.30pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>Crewkerne Music Appreciation</td>
<td>Fourth Thursday of each month</td>
<td>2.30pm-4.30pm</td>
<td>Henhayes Centre. TA18 8DA</td>
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<td>Taunton Deane Bowls Club</td>
<td>Every Wednesday</td>
<td>11.00am-1.00pm</td>
<td>Blackbrook Pavilion. TA1 2RW</td>
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<tr>
<td>Yeovil Bowls Group</td>
<td>Every Tuesday</td>
<td>10.30am-1.00pm</td>
<td>Yeovil Bowls Club. BA21 4AS</td>
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<tr>
<td>Taunton Acoustic Rifle Club</td>
<td>Every Thursday</td>
<td>2.00pm-4.30pm</td>
<td>Contact Somerset Sight for details</td>
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<tr>
<td>Taunton Craft Group</td>
<td>Every Friday</td>
<td>2.00pm-4.00pm</td>
<td>Somerset Sight TA1 1DG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Street Activity Group</td>
<td>Second Friday of each month</td>
<td>10.00am-12.00pm</td>
<td>Lantokay Weatherspoons. BA16 0EY</td>
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<tr>
<td>Acoustic Guitar</td>
<td>Contact Somerset Sight</td>
<td>Various</td>
<td>Somerset Sight TA1 1DG</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
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or call 01905 754 577

“Easily one of the best free apps for VI folks.”
-Marc Gulwell