

Somerset Insight



01823 333818

**Somerset
Sight** Working with people
who lack sight, not vision

Registered Charity No: 1154472

Issue 72
December 2021



The Queen's Award
for Voluntary Service



2021 Summer Holiday to Teignmouth

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Chair of Trustees Report



Our AGM was held in Wanstrow and was an informal and relaxed occasion. Our Treasurer, Ian Pinder, explained our 2020-2021 Annual Accounts in his usual succinct and clear way. It was good to be joined by some service users and volunteers and to hold the event in the eastern part of the county.

We are very pleased to welcome Johnnie Halliday to the Board of Trustees. Many of you will have met him at Somerset Sight events in the past during his time as High Sheriff of Somerset. He kindly contributed to our day in 2019 when our Patron the Lord Lieutenant, Mrs Anne Maw, gave Somerset Sight the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service. He supports many charitable organisations and we feel very lucky that he has agreed to join us.

I am sure that you will all join me and the Trustees in thanking our staff and tremendous Volunteers who have given so much over the last year. We send you our very best wishes for a happy and healthy 2022 and look forward to seeing you at an upcoming event.

With my best wishes
Bella Flood

Somerset Sight

Reception: 01823 333818

Email: admin@somersetsight.org.uk

Website: www.somersetsight.org.uk

CEO Report



More than 300 active volunteers support Somerset Sight. I want to thank each one of you for all you have done over the past year, in what has been, by any standards, difficult circumstances. You have been courageous, steadfast and resilient and without your support many people with visual impairment in Somerset would feel lonely, isolated, bereft of companionship and be unable to leave their home. Many of you have assisted with boosters and NHS appointments too.

Somerset Sight raises about £500,000 of income each year and delivers £2.3m of social benefit. This is leverage on a grand scale, about which we should be immensely proud. Put another

way, for every one hundred pounds you or others donate to Somerset Sight, the charity generates £500 of benefit.

Please consider a donation of £20 to Somerset Sight now. This would enable the charity to provide extra support to visually impaired people in Somerset – to give one to one help to those newly diagnosed; emotional support for friends and family ; take people living alone, on the planned holiday to Cornwall in 2022; provide a regular volunteer visitor; regular craft, cookery or lunch club; technology training, enabling people to make fully voice activated phone calls and emails; Charles Bonnet Support Group which is known to reduce anxiety and impact of visitations. These are life changers and by donating to Somerset Sight you can ensure they continue.

There is a donation form attached – please do your best to support us now so we can start 2022 with a flourish.

Wishing you a very merry Christmas and a happy New Year.

Best wishes
Jackie Sopwith



Somerset Sight Working with people who lack sight, not vision

Donation Form - Make a donation to Somerset Sight, over the phone by calling 01823 333818 or donate online at somersetsight.org.uk

Full Name		Tel:	
Address			
Postcode		Email:	

Single donation

I enclose a donation cheque of £..... for Somerset Sight

Multiple donations:

Standing Order Mandate:

Bank (e.g Lloyds)			
Bank Address			Postcode:

Please pay Somerset Sight Ltd;
Account Number: 57387068 Sort Code: 77-50-01

I would like to make a standing order of	£5	£10	£20	Other:
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With the first payment on the (Date) of (Month) 20..... (Year)			
Every Month	Quarter	Half Year	Year

Account Name							
Account Number							
Sort Code							

Thank you!

Gift Aid – Boost your donation by 25p of Gift Aid for every £1 you donate.

Gift Aid can be reclaimed by Somerset Sight from the tax you pay for the current year. Your address and postcode is needed to identify you as a current taxpayer. **You must tick the box below.**

I want to Gift Aid my donation to Somerset Sight and any donations I make in the future or have made in the past 4 years.

I am a UK taxpayer and understand that if I pay less Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations in that tax year it is my responsibility to pay any difference.

Date

- Please notify us if you want to cancel this donation, change your name or address or no longer pay sufficient tax on your income and/or capital gains.
- If you pay Income Tax at the higher or additional rate and want to receive the additional tax relief due to you, you must include all your gift aid donations on your Self-Assessment tax return or ask HM Revenue and Customs to adjust your tax code.

Send this form to:
Fundraising Office, Somerset Sight, Northfield House,
51 Staplegrove Road, Taunton TA1 1DG

If you are not already one of our members, we would like to add your name and contact details to our database so we can occasionally send you an update about our charity and how the funds are used to help the lives of our sight impaired members to become less isolated, more confident and more active within their communities.

In accordance with the UK Data Protection Act 2018, by signing below you are consenting to Somerset Sight securely storing your data. We do not pass on any of your information to any other organisation without your permission. If you wish to withdraw your consent at any time, please contact us and we will remove your records.

Signed:.....

Date:.....

Charity Registration Number 1154472

Resource Centre Update



Watching television can be incredibly frustrating when you're experiencing sight loss.

What can help? There are a number of options that could make things a little easier. For example, available in our Resource Centre or Mobile Advisory Service we have 2.1x spectacle binoculars they have individual focusing lenses and can be used to watch the TV or other distance viewing activities.

If you have Central vision loss, you may have found you are able to see a friend's face or the television better when you are not looking directly at them. Learning to use your point of best vision is a technique called eccentric viewing. This would involve identifying a part of the retina which has retained reasonable functionality. The effectiveness of this would of course depend on the damage to the retina.

Audio Description (AD) is a great tool where commentary is used to describe what's happening on the screen. This can enable someone with little or no sight to follow a programme. To turn on AD just press the AD button on your TV remote or go to your audio settings.

Televisions are very much like smartphones these days, with inbuilt accessibility features. Voice guidance is available in the latest models of Samsung and Panasonic TVs.

Setting up the accessibility features might not be straight forward and some sighted assistance may be required initially. Unless of course you already use phone applications such as Be My Eyes.

Television remote controls with lots of buttons can be tricky when you only need to use a few. We have several remote controls in our Resources department with clear easy to see, contrasting buttons. Such as the Easy TV-5 with just seven large white on black buttons keeping the remote controls simple and easy to use. The controls are Volume up/down, channel up/down, AV selection, Mute, Device selection and power on/off. This remote is compatible with a variety of TV brands.

I'd love to hear if you have any recommendations for making watching television more accessible.

Heidi Linegar

Seeing Life Differently Days

Writing an update allows me the time to reflect and appreciate just how much we have achieved in supporting new and existing Members of Somerset Sight. In my last update, I spoke of the three Seeing Life Differently courses we held in June this year. I'm pleased to say we have continued to support many individuals by delivering more SLDD courses in August, October and November.

In such turbulent times, it's an impressive achievement to have delivered so much face-to-face support to sight impaired people in Somerset.

It's lovely to watch the transformation from the first to the last session. The groups start as strangers and soon develop firm friendships. I can recall several of the attendees on the October course mentioning how they used

to paint but gave it up due to their sight loss. I often find comments such as this a challenge.

I always feel it's important for the sessions to be service user-led, encouraging autonomy.

I organised painting for the final session and each person chose their own subject. I hope that everything we covered in the three previous weeks, gave the members optimism and confidence for the future.

Seeing Life Differently Dates 2022

Taunton

Wednesdays
5th, 12th, 19th and 26th January

Yeovil

Wednesdays
9th, 16th and 23rd February



Duke of Edinburgh Awards

Rebecca Murray is 16 years old and has a visual impairment, however this has not stopped her doing her award with the Kings of Wessex Academy. She has completed Bronze and is well underway with her silver.

She says: I really enjoyed doing my bronze walking expedition and I have just completed my silver expedition where I canoed, something I had never done before starting my award. Both expeditions have given me new opportunities and taken me out of my comfort zone.

I did find my visual impairment made reading maps challenging as I find reading small print/ looking at small images challenging. Me and my dad found an online version of the maps I required via the OS app. We worked with Esther my DofE Leader to make sure I was able to use it on my expeditions via my phone and also made the expedition assessors aware of my visual impairment and my need to use the facility.

I have found that my DofE has made me try new activities that I probably wouldn't have tried otherwise. It has also made me meet and work with new people and has made me share

information about my visual impairment which isn't always easy to talk about.

Overall, I found I had to be open and honest about my visual impairment as it's not obvious when you look at me. As a result, I feel like I can now openly talk about it and how I came to have it.

I would definitely recommend the awards to others with visual impairments. It gives you new opportunities and it challenges you to do activities you otherwise think you are unable to do.

If this has inspired you to do your DofE award, contact Carol at DofE@somerset.gov.uk for more information.



Achieving Your Goals

The emotional support service continues to help and support people with visual impairments to come to terms with their sight loss, on an emotional and practical level, helping to overcome the frustrations of a sight impairment. A person that has been living with a sight impairment for a few years can sometimes get stuck, in one of the five stages of the grieving process of sight loss, these stages are denial, anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance. We work together in a safe environment enabling the person to share their emotional experiences and in doing so we can help them to move forward. Some people experience some of the stages of the grieving process at the same time, for instance someone can be experiencing denial, anger and a fleeting insight to acceptance, and fluctuate between two or three of these processed areas, so through exploring their emotions people can move forward.

Other people that have been newly diagnosed with eye conditions can find it extremely overwhelming and in some cases they are not quite ready to talk to anybody yet, so we have developed a randoms folder. People in the early stages can go onto the randoms folder, I will then

ring them once every two weeks to talk to them about the experiences they may be feeling at the moment and the overwhelming amount of hospital appointments they may have, then when the time is right for them they can move from the randoms folder to the full eight week emotional support service that Somerset Sight provides, we feel it's very important to give the client full control of which is the best way forward for them.

If you are someone that is experiencing difficult emotions and are struggling to come to terms with your visual impairment, then please do not hesitate to call Somerset Sight and ask about the emotional support service, and Graham will get back to you as soon as possible.



Charles Bonnet Support Group

We have just completed our third Charles Bonnet support group, it has been very successful and feedback has shown that the number and frequency of involuntary visions has reduced and many of them are not as vivid as they used to be.

The guided meditation has become so popular, that we have increased them from two guided meditations for eight weeks, to four guided meditations for eight weeks.

Here is what some people are saying who have joined the support groups:

- 1** - I do not feel so frightened of the things I see any more, thanks to the group and people sharing their experiences.
- 2** - I have always had trouble getting to sleep since I have been experiencing these visions, however since the meditations I repeat them to myself at bedtime and I have slept soundly for the last five nights.
- 3** - I am now trying to enjoy my visions rather than be frightened of them, that is thanks to the CBS groups I have taken part in.
- 4** - I have made friends and enjoyed listening to other people's

experiences so thank you for the opportunity and providing us with this great service.

5 - They have been in many ways a lifeline for me, I did consider maybe I was losing my mind, or some kind of dementia was setting in. Due to these fantastic groups that Somerset Sight are providing I now know it is to do with my failing sight, rather than any kind of mental health issue so for that I am extremely grateful thank you.

6 - I have never done any kind of meditation before, but listening to Graham's voice as he guides us on a fantastic journey through the meditation, I have found the breathing exercises that we do during the meditation extremely helpful and leaves me with a sense of well-being and a very calm feeling so thank you.

Some great quotes there, I would encourage anyone who was living and experiencing some involuntary visions known as Charles Bonnet syndrome, to get in touch with Somerset Sight and find out more about the CBS groups that we are providing, Graham will include you in a group as soon as possible.

Tech Support - Training Volunteers

At Somerset Sight we are very lucky to have a small group of dedicated technology volunteers that go into service user's homes and help them get to grips with their technology. Due to the nature of modern technology, constantly changing and upgrading, not to mention new products appearing on the market all of the time it is very hard to keep up to date.

We held a training day at Northfield House recently, where some of the volunteers were showed a few of the more popular versions of assistive technology that is available. We looked at text to speech and magnification software for desktops and laptops, iPhones and the easier to use mobile phone In Your Pocket.

Liam say's "All of my tech volunteers are amazing. They are

friendly and willing to help and will always have a go at new things. They haven't done the same job twice yet. Everything from installing Alexa's to setting up web cameras, downloading games and useful apps to helping everyday queries like forgetting a password.

It is extraordinary how they embrace each new challenge. It amazes me how with the help of Google and YouTube they have managed to overcome almost everything that they have faced. These wonderful Volunteers make such a huge difference to the support that Somerset Sight can offer to more of our members. I would like to thank each and every one of them for everything they do for me and Somerset Sight.



Learning How to Use an iPhone



Brian came into Somerset Sight with his new Apple iPhone recently. Graham, who uses an iPhone, helped him learn how to make calls, send emails, text messages and how to use Siri and voice over software. Brian went away excited to practice and is looking forward to continuing to learn more.

If you would like to learn how easy it is to get the best out of your phone please call us on 01823 333818

Graham Glover
Emotional Support Worker



OrCam Read.

A Game-Changer for People with Low Vision or Reading Difficulties

Here at Somerset Sight

Thursday 10th March 10am - 2pm

**Or book your free home demonstration now
Call Somerset Sight to book on an appointment 01823 333818**

Super Sue

Sue joined Somerset Sight in 2012 as a volunteer visitor and now visits 7 people on Claire Packwood's area, more than any other volunteer visitor ever has since the service began in 1997! Claire and Sue visited Joyce, one of Sue's ladies on October 26th to present Joyce with the £30 M&S voucher that she won for completing the feedback questionnaire about the volunteer visiting service. Joyce didn't want her photograph taken but said the following:

"I love Sue's visits, the time goes so quickly, we have a laugh together, it is so lovely to have someone to talk to in confidence about things, Sue's very useful too! She reads things for me, gets me bits and pieces from Somerset Sight and helps in lots of ways, her visits cheer me up too. Thank you for introducing her to me as my volunteer, it was such a lovely surprise to get the call about the M&S voucher which I shall very much enjoy spending!"

Sue said "I love my volunteering for Somerset Sight, all my ladies are very special to me, it gives me so much pleasure visiting and helping them with things which are difficult due to their sight

impairment, they all seem to enjoy my visits"

Claire Packwood said: "Sue is in an incredible volunteer, she's so energetic and active, a joy to work with, fun, reliable and a great support for her ladies. It's a testimony to Sue's skills and personality that she is now visiting 7 people for Somerset Sight. All Sue's visits to her ladies undoubtedly make a big positive difference to the quality of their lives, thank you Sue!"



Jason's First Football Match

Having never been to a top flight football match before, service user Jason Winsley attended Ashton Gate on Saturday 25th September. He was accompanied by volunteer visitor John Yeo who is a life-long Bristol City supporter and season ticket holder.

It was a championship match: Bristol City vs. Fulham.

Having negotiated their way through the throng of supporters outside the ground, the intrepid duo started off proceedings with a hamburger (with cheese and onions, of course) and a couple of pints. Then it was into the ground with 19,344 other football fans to watch the game.

Although sight-impaired and with other medical issues making it difficult to walk and negotiate the 27 steps to his seat, Jason rose to the challenge and by three o'clock we were ready for the whistle.

The game ebbed and flowed and by half-time, Fulham had taken a deserved 1 – 0 lead. The second half was a different story with Bristol City pushing for an equalizer which eventually came in the 79th minute. Jason was up out of his seat cheering with the rest of the City fans as Kaisey Palmer put the ball in the net and the ground erupted.

The final score was a fair 1 – 1 draw.

As we made our way slowly back to the car Jason remarked on how friendly and chatty everyone had been. He also commented on the incredible atmosphere with thousands of fans singing throughout the match. He also wryly noted that the pitch at Ashton Gate was a little bigger than his village football ground in Coleford.

It had been a thoroughly enjoyable afternoon.

John Yeo



A Trip on the Railway

I have been visiting Jean for over a year and in that time we have visited lots of lovely local places. In August this year we decided to visit the East Somerset Railway at Cranmore, near Shepton Mallet.

Standing on the platform as the steam engine entered the station was a thrill to all our senses; we felt the rumble and the steam and heard the toot!

We climbed aboard for a gentle 5-mile trip up the line, from Cranmore to Mendip Vale and back, enjoying the country views and the sound of the engine chugging away.

We rounded off the afternoon (as we do all our outings) with tea and cake at the Whistlestop Cafe!



Children's Activities

During October half term we held two activities. We visited Hollywood Bowl for a fun game of bowling followed by lunch and then a couple of days later we had a spooky cooking session with Catherine from Anybody Can Cook where the Children made cheesy potato spiders, meringues and cakes.

The children enjoyed eating their creations, followed by decorating

the cakes. They went home with lots of delicious treats to enjoy.



Louise and Emily's Days Out

I moved to Somerset in the middle of 2020 for work, with no friends or family nearby. Since then, I have made many friends through work but I wanted to meet new people, give back to the community and gain new skills through volunteering. I work full-time and knew I couldn't commit to set volunteering hours each week. So, I turned to the internet, looked up 'Volunteering in Somerset' and Somerset Sight popped up. After a chat with one of their Volunteer Co-ordinators I was invited to an induction day over in Taunton and become a Volunteer Visitor.

In September, I was paired with Louise who was a new user of Somerset Sight. After our

introductory meeting, we quickly decided on a date which worked for both of us as we balanced work and study. Our first outing was in October, where we spent several hours shopping both for ourselves and for Christmas presents. Then we visited The Newt in Somerset for a walk through the woods and their interactive 'Story of Gardening' museum. Through our monthly meet ups, I have been introduced to new areas of Somerset which Louise knows well and we have become fast friends.

I have thoroughly enjoyed spending time with Louise. I've been to new places, made a new friend and it has opened my eyes into the lives of people with limited or no sight.



Yeovil Visually Impaired Bowls Club

The YVIBC are ready and able to give any registered blind or partially sighted person the chance to learn and play lawn bowls.

We play outdoors from April to September and indoors from October through to March. We are guests of Yeovil Bowls and Squash Club who let us use the facilities every Tuesday from 11am until 1pm. We offer three free taster sessions to anyone interested in trying bowls and there is no obligation to join.

We are very lucky to have volunteer helpers who are experienced bowlers and have worked with the visually impaired for many years. We also have all the equipment a novice bowler will need, however footwear is not provided. Footwear just needs to be flat soled shoes or trainers, in any colour.

Bowling with the YVIBC can be done at whatever level you choose to do, from our 2 hour casual and social roll up on a Tuesday morning to possibly representing your country worldwide. At a small club like YVIBC, we are proud to boast a VI world champion and two VI bowlers who are part of the current England VI playing squad.

Lawn bowls is for everybody and the visually impaired are no exception. Guide dogs are welcome at Yeovil, but they are not allowed on any of the playing greens. Helpers for the blind are also welcome, but our volunteers are more than capable of helping the more severely sighted while on the greens.

Should you wish to find out more about us, please visit our website: www.yeovilvibowls.net alternatively phone our secretary Debbie Guppy on 01935 423957 or email yeovilvibowls@gmail.com.

You can also check out our Facebook page: Yeovil Visually Impaired Bowls Club.



Mobile Advisory Service Dates Jan 2022 - May 2022

Mendip

Area	Date	Location	Time
Glastonbury	Tue 18th Jan	Morrisons	10.30am – 3.30pm
	Tue 1st Feb	Morrisons	10.30am – 3.30pm
	Wed 30th March	Morrisons	10.30am – 3.30pm
	Wed 27th April	Morrisons	10.30am – 3.30pm
Frome	Mon 10th Jan	ASDA	10.30am – 3.30pm
	Mon 14th March	ASDA	10.30am – 3.30pm
	Tue 12th April	ASDA	10.30am – 3.30pm
	Tue 10th May	ASDA	10.30am – 3.30pm
Shepton Mallet	Tue 8th Feb	Tesco	10.30am – 1.30pm
	Mon 21st March	Tesco	10.30am – 3.30pm
	Thurs 7th April	Tesco	10.30am – 3.30pm
Wells	Mon 31st Jan	Tesco	10.30am – 3.30pm
	Mon 28th Feb	Tesco	10.30am – 3.30pm
	Mon 28th March	Tesco	10.30am – 3.30pm
	Mon 25th April	Tesco	10.30am – 3.30pm
	Weds 4th May	Tesco	10.30am – 3.30pm

Sedgemoor

Area	Date	Location	Time
Cheddar	Weds 12th Jan	Sainsbury's	10.30am – 3.30pm
	Wed 16th March	Sainsbury's	10.30am – 3.30pm
	Thurs 12th May	Sainsbury's	10.30am – 3.30pm

**PULL
OUT AND
KEEP!**

Sedgemoor

Area	Date	Location	Time
Bridgwater	Fri 7th Jan	Hospital	10.30am – 1.30pm
	Fri 21st Jan	Hospital	10.30am – 1.30pm
	Fri 4th Feb	Hospital	10.30am – 1.30pm
	Wed 9th Feb	Morrisons	10.30am – 3.30pm
	Fri 18th Feb	Hospital	10.30am – 1.30pm
	Fri 4th March	Hospital	10.30am – 1.30pm
	Fri 18th March	Hospital	10.30am – 1.30pm
	Tue 29th March	Morrisons	10.30am – 3.30pm
	Fri 1st April	Hospital	10.30am – 1.30pm
	Tues 26th April	Morrisons	10.30am – 3.30pm
Fri 6th May	Hospital	10.30am – 1.30pm	
Burnham-on-Sea	Tue 4th Jan	B & M	10.30am – 3.30pm
	Mon 7th Feb	B & M	10.30am – 3.30pm
	Thur 31st March	B & M	10.30am – 3.30pm
	Thur 28th April	B & M	10.30am – 3.30pm
Cannington	Thurs 10th Feb	By the Brook	10.30am – 12.30pm
	Thur 24th March	By the Brook	10.30am – 12.30pm
	Thurs 5th May	By the Brook	10.30am – 12.30pm
Highbridge	Thurs 17th Feb	ASDA	10.30am – 3.30pm
	Weds 11th May	ASDA	10.30am – 3.30pm
Nether Stowey	Thurs 10th Feb	St Mary's Church	1.30pm – 3.30pm
	Thur 24th March	St Mary's Church	1.30pm – 3.30pm
	Thurs 5th May	St Mary's Church	1.30pm – 3.30pm
North Petherton	Fri 25th Feb	Car Park	10.30am – 3.30pm
	Fri 25th March	Car Park	10.30am – 3.30pm

South Somerset

Area	Date	Location	Time
Chard	Fri 14th Jan	Hospital	10.30am – 1.30pm
	Thurs 3rd Feb	Sainsbury's	10.30am – 3.30pm
	Fri 11th March	Hospital	10.30am – 1.30pm
	Fri 8th April	Hospital	10.30am – 1.30pm
	Tue 19th April	Sainsbury's	10.30am – 3.30pm
Crewkerne	Tues 15th Feb	Henhayes Centre	10.30am – 3.30pm
Ilminster	Tue 22nd Feb	Tesco	10.30am -3.30pm
	Tue 22nd March	Tesco	10.30am – 3.30pm
Martock	Wed 2nd March	Car Park	10.30am – 3.30pm
	Fri 22nd April	Car Park	10.30am – 1.30pm
Langport	Thurs 3rd March	Tesco	10.30am – 3.30pm
Somerton	Weds 5th Jan	Cox's Yard	10.30am – 3.30pm
	Weds 2nd Feb	Cox's Yard	10.30am – 3.30pm
	Thurs 10th March	Cox's Yard	10.30am – 3.30pm
	Weds 13th April	Cox's Yard	10.30am – 3.30pm
S.Petherton	Thurs 13th Jan	Hospital	10.30am – 12.30pm
	Weds 6th April	Hospital	10.30am – 12.30pm
Stoke Sub Hamdon	Thurs 13th Jan	Car Park	1.30pm – 3.30pm
	Weds 6th April	Car Park	1.30pm – 3.30pm
Wincanton	Weds 19th Jan	Morrisons	10.30am – 3.30pm
	Weds 16th Feb	Morrisons	10.30am – 3.30pm
	Weds 19th March	Morrisons	10.30am – 3.30pm
	Weds 20th April	Morrisons	10.30am – 3.30pm
	Tue 3rd May	Morrisons	10.30am – 3.30pm
Yeovil	Tues 11th Jan	Hospital	10.30am – 3.30pm
	Weds 23rd Feb	Hospital	10.30am – 3.30pm
	Tue 8th March	Hospital	10.30am – 3.30pm
	Tues 5th April	Hospital	10.30am – 3.30pm
Bruton	Mon 7th March	Budgen's	10.30am – 12.30pm
Castle Cary	Mon 7th March	Car Park	1.30pm – 3.30pm

Mobile Advisory Service Dates

Taunton Deane

Area	Date	Location	Time
Wellington	Thurs 20th Jan	ASDA	10.30am – 3.30pm
	Thurs 24th Feb	ASDA	10.30am – 3.30pm
	Weds 23rd March	ASDA	10.30am – 3.30pm
	Thurs 21st April	ASDA	10.30am – 3.30pm
Wiveliscombe	Mon 4th April	Car Park	1.30pm – 3.30pm

West Somerset

Area	Date	Location	Time
Minehead	Mon 17th Jan	Morrisons	10.30am – 3.30pm
	Mon 21st Feb	Morrisons	10.30am – 3.30pm
	Thurs 17th March	Morrisons	10.30am – 3.30pm
	Thurs 14th April	Morrisons	10.30am – 3.30pm
Dulverton	Mon 4th April	Hanover Court	10.30am – 12.30pm
Porlock	Tue 15th March	Car Park (Near the One Stop Shop)	10.30am – 12.30pm
Williton	Tues 15th March	Car Park	1.30pm – 3.30pm
Watchet	Thurs 6th Jan	Coach Park	10.30am – 3.30pm
	Tues 1st March	Coach Park	10.30am – 3.30pm
	Mon 11th April	Coach Park	10.30am – 3.30pm

Dates may be subject to change.

If you are making a special journey, please call our office prior to your visit on **01823 333818**.



HumanWare's Explore portable magnifiers

Explore 5 - £399, the perfect 'carry in your pocket' portable magnifier.

From reading TV listings, menus, food packaging and medicine box details, you will find lots of uses for your Explore 5.



Explore 8 - £699

Explore 8 provides superb image for close-up reading and distance viewing.

With an 8" screen and easy to use buttons, magnification and settings can be changed instantly to suit your preferences.



Explore 12 £1395 - The new Two in One portable magnifier for Reading and Writing, includes Writing Stand and Carry Bag

Explore 12 is a new simple to use full HD quality magnifier, excellent for near and distance viewing.



The Explore 12 makes writing so enjoyable, but you can also take it out of the Writing Stand and use it to read wherever you are.



The versatile Explore 12 will allow you to restart your hobbies and enjoy looking at family photographs again.

Explore 12 unlocks the power of reading and writing.

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Nancy and Phylida's Adventure

Nancy and I decided to visit a small nature reserve which is on the edge of Frome. We saw and smelled, some beautiful, purple wild oregano, some beautifully bright yellow colts foot and some big patches of purple asters. The ponds were full of reeds which made a lovely noise in the wind, and we could hear the sound of water from the river. Walking in the sunshine was really very pleasant.

We had almost completed the circuit when we came across a marshy area, where the stream was overflowing onto the grass and, we soon realised, over the pathway. Someone had thoughtfully laid down a higgledy piggledy pattern of loose planks of decking to act as stepping stones, and we had to decide whether we should attempt to cross using them, or turn around and do almost the complete circular walk again in reverse. The water was probably only about ankle deep, but if we lost our balance and fell, we could've got very wet indeed. Nancy thought we should try the adventurous way.

So, we had to, extremely slowly, edge ourselves along the planks. I went first, to see which ones were wobbly and which were okay to stand on. Some would definitely have tipped us into the

water. Some of the way I walked backwards, holding both of Nancy's hands to guide her, and telling her which planks to put her feet on. Sometimes we both went sideways, still holding hands and shuffling along on single planks. You'll be pleased to hear that we managed to make it across the 'swamp' without falling in.

We were so pleased with ourselves at the end - we felt like we'd scaled a mountain or crossed a ravine.



Flying High

Den is 97 years old and very proud to be ex-RAF, he has loved flying all his life. I am his Volunteer Visitor and have known Den for 4 years. Some of you may remember we published a story 3 years ago when Den went flying in the back of a two seat Spitfire.

He's been flying again and this time courtesy of a charity called Project Propeller which, each year, arranges for a get-together of 2nd World War RAF crew.

This happens at an airfield in central England, and volunteer pilots fly the gents (and ladies) in for tea and cake, a good chat, and a flyby by a Spitfire or Hurricane.

This year Den was unable to go because of covid regulations at his care home, but the Project Propeller organiser arranged a pleasure flight with a volunteer Pilot James Golding from Gloucestershire Airport in October.

I escorted Den and we had a lovely flight down past the Forest of Dean, then close to the Severn bridges and back over Filton.

Den did really well to clamber into the plane, over the wing and into the back seat and was buzzing with excitement afterwards!

Jeff Turner
Volunteer Visitor



Angela Blackwell Exhibition

What Are You Looking At? was an art exhibition including short film by Severely Sight Impaired Visual Artist and Somerset Sight Trustee Angela Blackwell/Charles. Angela tells us more about the exhibition below.

It's been a month now since What Are You Looking At? held at OSR Projects in West Coker, Somerset. I can't believe how exciting the experience was for both myself and those who came along, especially for all the visitors with visual impairments.

The exhibition was funded by Arts Council England to explore my experience of 'Coming out as a Blind Painter'

What Are You Looking At? consisted of 11 new abstract paintings up to 1.5 meters in size and some humorous wallpaper which illustrated the time I mistook

a women in a red coat for a dog poo bin. In a nod to growing up in a seaside town there was a piece of work called 'It's Me'. This larger than life sized pier style portrait of myself and Guide Dog Flynn invited visitors put their face through the hole and be 'me' for a short moment.

It was very important to me that accessibility was at the heart of this exhibition. The artworks were all accompanied by large print and braille labels as well as audio descriptions (many kindly created and read by the volunteers at Newline the talking newspaper for Chard and Ilminster). This made the work accessible to as many Visually Impaired visitors as possible.

Accompanying the artworks was the playful, thought provoking and honest film by Liberty Smith

that followed me as I shared the challenges of losing my sight as a visual artist and 'coming out' to buyers of my work, galleries and colleagues after years of hiding it. Again the film was made accessible with a clever use of audio description by my favourite voice on TV Christopher Flowers, who has most famously worked on programmes such as Gotham and The Simpsons. The film was also subtitled throughout.

One of my highlights was giving the Somerset Sight Ilminster social

group a tour of the exhibition alongside tea and cake. It was great to see everyone using all the accessible audio descriptions and labelling and I even let them touch the art - this was a first for me! Whilst there we had a visit from the BBC, which resulted in a discussion on BBC Somerset Radio and a film shown on BBC Points West - great promotion for both the exhibition and the fabulous work of Somerset Sight.





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Rich's Cider Farm

5 of us arrived, looking forward to a tour and tasting session at the cider farm, followed by a carvery and pint of cider!

George our tour guide described the grafting of the tree and the different types of apple trees used and how the process was operated by water. We were shown the washing, pulping, pressing, drying and separation of the cider. The excess liquids are turned into dried pulp that is used for animal feed.

We were then shown into the museum where we saw the various

pieces in the old cider process. After answering some questions on the process George took us to the restaurant where we were given our delicious tasters which turned out to be three half pints of different ciders that they produce, they were dry scrumpy, medium scrumpy and then heavy scrumpy.

This was followed by the carvery and a pint. The bar décor was great with bicycle cog and peddles at the front, all of which contributed to the ambiance of the farm house.

It was a brilliant day out.



Memorable Summer Trip to Teignmouth

In September a group of Service Users went on two-night holiday to Teignmouth packed full of fun activities. The getaway provided an opportunity for participants to socialise, make new friends, and enjoy a late summer break along the beautiful Devon coast.

Activities included a visit to Dartmouth, a cruise accompanied by seals, walking on the beach and paddling in the sea, sightseeing in Dawlish, and plenty of ice cream and fish and chips.

Anna said: "It was the most wonderful, happy few days away.



I felt like it was a much longer trip, we packed so much in. All the staff and volunteers were so kind and didn't stop caring for us the whole time. It wouldn't have been nearly as enjoyable without them. All of us are in the same boat with our sight loss, so you don't have to keep explaining things, everyone understands. I can't wait until the next trip!"

If you would be interested in joining the next holiday, please get in touch with Heidi.



Somerset Visually Impaired Cricket Team

Somerset Visually Impaired Cricket Club were delighted to return to playing cricket in 2021. 2020 saw the world beset by challenges not seen in many of our lifetimes and we wouldn't want to belittle the situation by saying how much we missed sport but it really does mean a lot to us.

Reviewing the year end, it has not just been a successful year collectively, but individually as well. Captain Ed Hossell won partially sighted Player of the Year; his eighth gong, making him the most successful player since the awards began and a whole host of other players received nominations for various awards too.

One of the players Alan says "What makes Somerset VI Cricket Club so special is being part of a group of VI people who are friendly, welcoming, caring and supportive. Happy to help and advise you in any way. It is

a social group but also competitive at the same time. Great support and volunteers and a really strong inclusive ethos within the club.

Advice for new people is: come and have a go. There is no pressure. Even if you want to play for fun, competitively or meet new people, you will be welcome with open arms.

Please get in touch if you are interested in playing or volunteering. It's not just the players that make us what we are, we rely on our wonderful volunteers and supporters to help us with transport and game day hospitality and we wish to extend our heartfelt thanks to you all!

If you would like to get involved, or find out more about Somerset Visually impaired Cricket Club, please contact Alan (Chairman) at somersetvicricket@gmail.com



Andrew and Friends Enjoy Sailing

Early in July, Liam Harkness contacted me to enquire whether I would be interested in attending a sailing day in Poole.

In the days when I had been fully sighted, dinghy sailing had been one of my favourite recreations which I followed on nearly every holiday in Cornwall. But this was to be something different, a full day sailing on a 46-foot yacht, with a competent skipper and crew. Organised by VISA which stands for the visually impaired sailing association. This would be only the second time I had ever sailed on a yacht, the first time being exactly 40 years ago, coincidentally from Poole harbour.

I jumped at the chance and Liam kindly added my name to the list. There would be five of us in total and our number would be almost matched by the number of fully sighted competent crew members.

On the day, Tony, our driver picked us up from Northfield House at 9am and by 11am we were alongside Poole quay within walking distance of our boat, a 46-foot Bavaria yacht named "Whe all go".

We were individually guided safely along the quay by Tim, the skipper. The crew took great

care in assisting us along a floating pontoon in order to board the boat. Once aboard, we were assisted in descending to the galley. We had a safety briefing and were told we could ask any questions at any time. Bad move! They don't know how inquisitive I am. We were then assisted in ascending the companionway ladder to the cockpit at the rear of the board, where we were safely seated on the benches on each side.

We were confined to the cockpit for the voyage. From our position of safety, we could observe the crew releasing the mooring lines while the skipper barked orders from the helm. By 11.30 we were underway, but encountered some obstacles on our journey to the harbour entrance. It was like Piccadilly by sea. Travelling behind us in convoy, we had motor cruises and other large vessels. Helming in those conditions you have to know what you're doing. At the narrow harbour entrance, we encountered the final potential obstacle in the shape of the sandbanks to shell bay ferry which everyone gives way to when its in motion. Fortunately, it was in its docked position and still loading.

Finally clear of the harbour entrance we were free to engage in the pastime, we had all come for and under instruction from our expert crew, we operated the winches and unfurled the sails.... This was proper sailing at last.

One by one we were called to the stern of the boat by the skipper and invited to helm under his instruction. This was far easier than I expected it to be.

At sea at last we continued heading south for about half an hour then turned to the east and sailed parallel to the shoreline of Studland Bay. At lunchtime we anchored up inside of the bay and its beautiful long beach in full sunshine.

The crew erected a spray hood over the cockpit and the crew fetched up a delicious selection of sliced pork pie and ham buns for us.

What a life! We could have been overlooking St Tropez or the Costa Esmeralda in Sardinia. It was a shame to eventually up anchor and retrace our steps back to Poole Quay. We were invited to descend yet again to the galley to remove Life jackets. There the crew treated us to hot drinks and biscuits and invited us to ask any final questions.

What a fantastic day we all had!
Andrew Molan



Country House Fair and Treasure Trove Sale

We held our fabulous biennial Country House Fair & Treasure Trove Sale in September in the beautiful grounds of Yarlington House near Wincanton.

The weather was amazing and we welcomed over 1000 people through the gates.

The place was buzzing as people wondered around, browsing and purchasing from the stallholders. They sampled coffee, cake and other refreshments and enjoyed the lovely sunshine in the grounds.

We raised a fantastic £10,000 at the event and would like to send a massive thank you to Count and Countess Charles De Salis for hosting the event. Also, our thanks

go to all of the Trustees, Staff and Volunteers who supported the event. Everyone generously supported our Grand Prize Draw which raised over £3500.



Music at Somerset Sight

We are very lucky to have Chris Ball, Pianist, who regularly entertains us at Somerset Sight.

In October Chris played at our cream tea and then again in December at our mince pies and carols, Volunteer party.

Our thanks go to Chris for his support and the wonderful music he plays.



Somerset Sight Craft Group

The Somerset Sight craft group meets at Northfield House, every Friday from 1pm - 3pm. You can have an afternoon of socialising whilst having a go at any crafts you fancy!

Why not pop along in the New Year and meet the group. Sarah, the leader of the group is able to support you to create a wide range of arts and crafts.

If you have any further questions, call Kate on 01823 333818



Craft House Chocolate Visit

In October, we had a very special visit to Craft House Chocolate in Somerton. Over two days, 20 of our lucky service users had the opportunity to not only learn about the incredibly long and complex process from bean to bar and the difference between beans from Africa and South America, we also got to try the beautiful chocolate. After spending an hour and a half around the tasting table we got the opportunity to peruse the shop of all its delicious treats. One service user said "I can't believe how much work goes into each bar and the time it takes is incredible."

You certainly get what you pay for as the taste is so different to what you buy in a normal shop."



Activities and Social Groups Dates Jan 2022 - July 2022

Taunton Deane

Type	Date	Time	Location
Taunton Craft Group	Every Friday	1.15pm - 3.15pm	Somerset Sight TA1 1DG
Taunton Acoustic Rifle Club	Every Thursday	2.00pm - 4.30pm	Contact Somerset Sight for details
Taunton Deane Bowls Club	Every Wednesday	11.00am - 1.00pm	Blackbrook Pavilion. TA1 2RW
Activity		Price	Date
Choir Taster Session Taking place at Somerset Sight TA1 1DG		£2 for refreshments	Monday 17th January 2pm - 3:30pm
Flower arranging at Northfield House, Taunton with cooked lunch Join us at Northfield House and let your creativity blossom and create a beautiful late winter flower arrangement. Included in the price will be a lovely warm lunch to enjoy while chatting about your new creations.		£22.50 which includes all materials and hot lunch	Tuesday 22nd February starting at 10:30am
Retina UK and Somerset Sight Support Group at Northfield House, Taunton Speaker from Retina UK & Graham Glover from Somerset Sight. Please contact Kate on 01823 333818 to book		£3 includes light refreshments.	Monday 7th March

Mendip

Type	Date	Time	Location
Street Activity Group	First Monday of each month	11.00am - 1.00pm	Lantokay Wetherspoons BA16 0EY
Frome Social Group	Last Thursday of each month. £3 each January, there is a special talk on birdsong. This is an extra £5 per person.	10am - 12pm	Cheese and Grain, Room 2 BA11 1BE
Wells Social Group	Second Friday of each month	10am - 12pm	The Bishop's Table BA5 2PD
Activity		Price	Date
Burns the Bread baking session with lunch This incredibly tasty activity was so popular last time we have been lucky enough to be able to book two days so more of our service users can take advantage of this opportunity. Not only will you get to learn how to bake some tasty treats you will also get to take what you made home to enjoy later.		£10.00	Monday 7th March Wednesday 16th March Both days will start at 9:00am and finish at 1:30pm
VIP guided tour and cheese tasting in the home of Cheddar Cheese Come and learn all there is to know about the only Cheddar made in Cheddar. This amazing visit will include viewing their dairy to see how their authentic traditional cheddar cheeses are made before visiting one of their cheese maturing stores, to learn how they age the cheeses to perfection. The culmination of your visit will be a guided tasting of a selection of their award-winning traditional cheddars and a little goody bag to take home.		£12.50	Monday 18th April starting at 10:00am

Sedgemoor

Type	Date	Time	Location
Bridgwater Social Group	Second Wednesday of each month except January, and August	2.30pm - 4.30pm	St Francis Church Hall. TA6 4JA
Bridgwater Fish and Chip Lunch Club	Second Friday of each month.	12 - 2pm	Victoria Park Community Centre, TA6 7AS
Bridgwater Buffet Evening	Last Friday of each month	6pm onwards	The Nutmeg House TA6 3EN

South Somerset

Type	Date	Time	Location
Chard Social Group	Contact Somerset Sight for details of next meeting	2.30pm - 4pm	Methodist Church Hall. TA20 1PT
Yeovil Social Group	First Monday of each month	10.30am - 12pm	Westlands Entertainment Centre BA20 2DD
Yeovil Bowls Club	Every Tuesday	10.30am - 1pm	Yeovil Bowls Club BA21 4AS
Ilminster Activity Group	Meets Monthly. Next date 19th Jan	10.30am	No 57, Ilminster TA19 0AW
Activity		Price	Date
Tenpin Bowling at the Hollywood Bowling Centre in Yeovil Come and join us at the Hollywood Bowling Centre in Yeovil where we can enjoy a couple of great games of bowling and chat amongst friends.		£3.25 per person per game	Monday 17th January starting at 2pm

Devon, Dorset and Cornwall

Activity	Price	Date
Mapperton House and Gardens Visit A hidden Dorset gem with outstanding countryside views and much to explore. Come and join us on a visit to a beautiful Jacobean country manor house and truly stunning gardens. We have organised a guided tour of this beautiful house so we can learn all about the history and the families that have lived there. We will be able to spend time in their famous landscaped gardens and also get to enjoy a delicious lunch in the Coach House restaurant.	£15, not including lunch and transport. Transport may be available from Somerset Sight.	Monday 16th May
Mini Break to Newquay Join us on a three day minibreak to Newquay. Our holidays have been so popular in the past we have decided to go away again in 2022 and have chosen to visit Newquay in the beautiful county of Cornwall. We will get to visit some local attractions, explore some stunning beaches and hopefully enjoy a real Cornish pasty.	Please call 01823 333818 to register your interest and more details will follow in January.	Tuesday 7th to Thursday 9th June
Day trip to Sidmouth Come and join us on a lovely day trip to Sidmouth. Walk along the sea front, explore the town find a quaint little seaside restaurant to enjoy a delicious lunch and hopefully later in the day get to enjoy an ice-cream or two.	£25 per person, for travel from Somerset Sight, Taunton. Lunch not included	Wednesday 13th July

Please contact Somerset Sight before attending the Activities or Social Groups. For more information about any of the activities or to book please call 01823 333818 or visit the booking page.



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