



Spotlight

Spring 2022

ISSUE 106

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Please send your articles for inclusion in Spotlight to:

The Editor

Essex Sight
40 Osborne Street
Colchester
CO2 7DB

01206 548196

Email: services@essexsight.org.uk

Items for the next issue should reach the Editor by 31st May



The Editor writes:

Welcome to our new quarterly newsletter and it is great to be able to bring an issue that includes real events where real people can meet each other in person, rather than virtually. Not that I'm against the use of technology, far from it, as it has allowed us all to stay connected for the past two years, but the ability to socialize is so important. Spring is also in the air and after the lockdown, we certainly welcome the season of revival and reinvigoration!

We hope you will find the articles informative and of interest. Please feel free to share Spotlight with other visually impaired people and their carers. Everyone who is newly registered in Essex will receive a copy of Spotlight and they can request their own copy in large print format, memory stick or by email. Unfortunately, we are unable to provide copies in Braille or on cassette.

I hope you will all continue to send your contributions, as your stories and experiences make Spotlight of interest to everyone. You can email articles to services@essexsight.org.uk

Editor

Community Support Team by Jonathan Dixon

I would like to echo the sentiment of the Editor, this is a season for renewal and as you will find out, we will at last try and celebrate what was our centenary two years ago. Unfortunately, some of the planned events will not take place as the economic toll on the events industry has meant that some of the events are no longer, as the organisers are sadly no longer trading. However, we intent to make the most of it and have chosen to promote our services at key events this year - more of that later! Most importantly our pop-up sight centres have popped up again!

Since October last year, we have been able to re-open several of our regional sight centres, including our monthly service at Maldon Library and a monthly service at Chelmsford Central Library (full details and locations/times can be found on the last page of this issue of Spotlight).

It has been so nice to be back in the community and we have seen many people at these sessions, highlighting that our service is still very much in demand. As the country starts to get back to some sort of normality, we hope to be able to offer more outreach services (see below). Our colleagues at Brentwood CVS plan to hold more community coffee mornings in 2022 and we will join them as often as we are able and, as the weather improves, our mobile unit will be “on the road,” reaching you, if you cannot get to us.

Reintroducing Clacton Sight Centre

We are pleased to reintroduce Clacton Sight Centre which is held on the 2nd Tuesday of each month, 12 noon to 2 pm by appointment. When making your appointment, please let us know of any aids/pieces of equipment you might want us to bring to Clacton for demonstration.

Future dates for 2022 – Thursday 10th March, April 14th, May 12th, June 9th, July 14th, August 11th, September 8th, October 13th, November 10th, and December 8th.

We look forward to seeing you.

Colchester Coffee Morning

Due to lack of space and for logistical reasons, we have been unable to restart our weekly coffee morning in our Colchester Sight Centre. We are, however, happy to announce that we have started a new, monthly coffee morning at the Quaker Meeting House in Colchester.

This is an accessible and spacious venue which allows us to accommodate more people and has good catering facilities to make tea and coffee. All VIs and their family/carers are welcome.

The cost is £2 per person and includes tea/coffee and biscuits. If demand increases, we would be happy to look at holding it more regularly.

Third Tuesday of each month 10am – 12noon.

Quaker Meeting House, 6 Church Street, Colchester, CO1 1NF

Future dates: 15th March, 19th April, 17th May, 21st June.

Essex Residents Panel

Essex Residents' Panel; is an online platform designed to empower local people to share views and opinions on council issues.

With over 300,000 people aged 18-35 living in Essex, the panel is currently underrepresented by younger voices, with residents in this age bracket forming just 10% of all sign-ups. With a new strapline of 'Essex, Get Vocal.', the panel is designed to provide people across all generations with an opportunity to feedback on local issues via quick and easy surveys, leading to improvements to services that truly matter to them.

To have your say on issues that truly matter to you, help shape services for generations to come and be in with a chance of winning a quarterly prize draw, sign up to the panel online today, by visiting:

www.essex.gov.uk/getvocal

Events

Essex Sight Annual Exhibition 2022

We are delighted to announce the return of our annual exhibition of services and products for anyone affected by sight loss.

This year, the event will be taking place at the Central Baptist Church in Chelmsford. This is a large, spacious building allowing us to accommodate a good number of exhibitors and ensuring there is enough room for people to spread out.

If you are looking to purchase a piece of low vision equipment, then this is a good opportunity to “try before you buy.” Local charities and services, together with some of the national charities who help people with sight loss will also be in attendance, not to mention Essex Sight’s staff and volunteers who have many years of experience between them and can answer any of your questions.

This is a free event and is wheelchair accessible.

Date: Wednesday 11th March 2022

Time: 10am – 1pm

Location: Central Baptist Church, Victoria Road South, Chelmsford CM1 1LN

Essex Sight on Tour!

In addition to our own events, we will be attending some of the key community events across the County this year to promote eye health and provide awareness of the support we can offer to VI people.

Essex Young Farmers Show on Sunday 22nd May at Boyton Hall in Roxwell, Chelmsford. More information is available on their website www.essexyoungfarmers.com

Blackwater Country Show Sunday 19th June at Chigborough Road, Heybridge, Essex CM9 4RB. For more info tel 01621 858150 or visit the website www.blackwatercountryshow.co.uk

Tendring Hundred Show on Saturday 9th July at Lawford House Park, Nr Manningtree, Essex. For more info [tel 01206 231821](tel:01206231821) or visit the website www.tendringshow.co.uk

RideLondon

RideLondon (no that's not a typo, it is one word) the festival of cycling is coming to London and Essex from Friday 27th until Sunday 29th May 2022. The iconic 100-mile distance is the longest challenge ride in the RideLondon programme and will come into Essex via the historic Epping Forest. Riders will glide past some of the county's most picturesque towns and villages, including Ongar, Fyfield, the Rodings and Great Dunmow, before joining a section of the 2014 Stage Three Tour de France route through Felsted and around Chelmsford before heading through Writtle and back towards Ongar and central London, finishing at Tower Bridge.

Of course, for an event of this magnitude, there will be road closures. The organisers have advised that they will be numerous and could have an impact depending on where you live. More comprehensive details will be posted to all households approximately one month before the festival and will be posted online by the end of March at www.ridelondon.co.uk/road-closures.

However, the routes will affect the following areas:

Friday 27 th May:	Braintree, Chelmsford, Colchester, Maldon
Saturday 28 th May:	Braintree, Chelmsford, Epping Forest, Uttlesford
Sunday 29 th May	Chelmsford, Epping Forest, Uttlesford

News and Products

Post Office Offers Banking Services

In almost every town it seems like the banks are closing branches, often leaving people with no high street bank whatsoever.

The Post Office can offer everyday banking at branches across the UK. It's free and means you can access your high street bank account through a Post Office near you. In their information leaflets, they say they have 11,500 branches across the UK so, hopefully, there should be one near you.

You can pay in cash and cheques, withdraw money and check your balance. You will need your bank card and, if you are paying in cheques then you may need a paying in slip from your own bank account (check beforehand to ensure you have all the documentation you need).

For more information, check at your local Post Office.

Winging it Blind

Simon Mahony, the author who has written *Decent into Darkness* and *First catch your Rabbit* has released his third book, *Winging it Blind*. The book explores the world of sight loss through five distinct levels: essential knowledge, management and adaptation, engagement with the real world, practical steps towards independence, and sight loss and society.

The first four levels are packed with information and advice. The fifth level takes a look at sight loss and its relationship with society through the author's personal perceptions and experience.

Simon says 'As we are considered to be 'procedures' rather than people, we are told nothing by the eye clinics. We are condemned to hurtle into the unknown. The best way to beat the fear of the unknown is knowledge. This will take away much of the terror and, more to the point, allow you to challenge what is possible'.

Winging it Blind provides both the knowledge and the ways of regaining your life after sight loss. The author, who is totally blind, shares what he has learned through some very difficult years.

Whether you have the courage to reach out and use this knowledge is, of course, another matter.

The book can be purchased from amazon or via Simon's website, <http://www.wingingitblind.com> , which also has some interesting articles and the author's blog.

London Vision Impairment Forum – End of an Era

The LVIF as it is known has been providing a platform for sight loss professionals to network and share information about their services and raise any concerns or issues they are facing.

The forum has been well established for a number of years and continues to attract new and existing sight loss organisations, researchers, statutory services, and service users. Their bulletin is a mine of information of treatments, equipment, technology and could be regarded almost as a 'Tomorrows World' for all people working with or those with a VI.

Sadly, London Vision is no longer managing the LVIF and as such the bulletins have now ended. We sincerely hope that the LVIF will manage to continue to survive without the support of London Vision and that they can continue to share their news in the not too distant future.

Quiz

Test your geographical knowledge of the United Kingdom.

1. Which English county has the longest coastline ?
2. Which English county has the second longest coastline ?
3. What is the largest county in England ?
4. What is the smallest City (by population) in the UK ?
5. Which Scottish river flows through England before entering the North Sea ?
6. What is the longest river in Scotland ?
7. What is the longest river entirely in England ?
8. What is the longest river entirely in Wales ?
9. What is Belfast's river called ?
10. Which two English counties share a border with Scotland ?
11. In which county would you find Cromer ?
12. In which county would you find the "Cheviot Hills" ?
13. Which island is separated from the British mainland by the Menai Straits ?
14. The Great Orme is a feature in which Welsh seaside town?
15. Chapel Allerton and Horsforth are districts in which English City ?
16. What is the largest lake in the UK ?
17. What is the longest canal in the UK ?
18. Which uplands form the "spine" of Northern England ?
19. Which river is known as the Isis in Oxford ?

Technology

QR Scanner

We all know what barcodes are, but are you aware of QR Codes? These are a different type of barcode which can be read by a digital device, for example, an app on your smartphone. These codes, which are a square shaped grid with black and white squares (pixels), provide information about services, events, companies and often have a direct link to the relevant website.

If you use a smartphone, you can download a QR app. With the app open, you hold it up to the QR code and the information comes up on your screen. With voiceover, the information will be read out to you. It doesn't matter if the QR code is not in the centre of your phone, or if you get surrounding information/text in the picture. The app will still be able to read the code.

Doro 780X

At a time when smartphones can do everything from browsing the internet to paying for goods, sometimes it's easy to forget the main reason for having a mobile phone. The Doro 780X is for those who need the simplest possible mobile phone with a focus on safety.

You can only call 3 people you rely on most, using the three large keys with name labels. This makes it easy to reach the people closest to you, without having to navigate menus. It is possible to receive SMS, but not to send any. It also has excellent safety functions such as a safety timer and an assistance button for sending an alarm with GPS position if you need help. It is also water-resistant.

The 780X can be purchased from Amazon.

Entertainment

Vocal Eyes

Experience art and culture through audio description. Bringing theatre, museums, galleries and heritage sites to life for blind and visually impaired people.

For more information or to find out what's on near you, email: enquiries@vocaleyes.co.uk or telephone 020 7375 1043.

VocalEyes is also setting up a forum bringing together blind and visually impaired people working in the UK arts and heritage sector.

If you work in any area of arts and heritage, please join us and help shape our new forum. It will aim to be supportive, for members to share tips and knowledge from across the sector. You may want advice in a particular role, have questions about getting the best from access to work assessments or just want to discuss challenges faced in your role, or share how you overcame any barriers to access.

How the forum is run and how it develops will be shaped by its members.

For the moment, we're just gathering names and contact details of people who are interested, and we'll then send out some dates and set a meeting at a date and time that suits everyone.

If you are interested, please contact Jessica Beal, Marketing and Audience Manager on [**jessica@vocaleyes.co.uk**](mailto:jessica@vocaleyes.co.uk)

Spotlight On

This Month in History: March

1 st	1912	First parachute jump is made from a moving plane
3 rd	1938	Oil is discovered in Saudi Arabia
6 Th	1836	Texan volunteers are defeated at The Alamo
7 th	1976	Alexander Graham Bell patents the telephone
9 th	1964	The first Ford Mustang is built
12 th	1894	Coca Cola is sold in bottles for the first time
15 th	44BC	Julius Caesar is stabbed to death by Marcus Brutus
16 th	1872	Wanderers FC win the first FA Cup
17 th	1845	The rubber band is invented
18 th	1965	First person walks in space
20 th	1916	Einstein publishes his theory of relativity
21 st	1999	First circumnavigation of Earth by hot air balloon
23 rd	1903	Wright brothers apply for plane patent
25 th	1807	Slavery is abolished in Great Britain and Ireland
26 th	1953	Jonas Salk announces polio vaccine
27 th	1914	First successful blood transfusion is performed
29 th	2004	Ireland becomes the first to ban all workplace smoking
30 th	1858	Hyman Lipman patents a pencil with an attached eraser
31 st	1899	The Eiffel Tower is inaugurated

Answers to quiz

1. Cornwall
2. Essex
3. Yorkshire
4. St. David's
5. River Tweed
6. River Tay
7. River Severn
8. River Towy (Twyi)
9. River Lagan
10. Northumberland and Cumbria
11. Norfolk
12. Northumberland
13. Anglesey
14. Llandudno
15. Leeds
16. Lake Neagh (Northern Ireland)
17. Grand Union Canal
18. Pennines
19. River Thames

Contact details

Helpline and office

01206 548196

(Carol Massey, Christine Pratt, Denise Sanders and Steve Massey)

Eye Clinic Liaison Officers

01206 548196

Christine & Denise (Colchester + Tendring hospitals)

Read House

01255 673654

(Tina Cox, Administrator)

Read House is the residential care home run by Essex Blind Charity in Frinton on Sea. The home specialises in the care of elderly people with sight problems. We offer permanent and respite care (short breaks) by staff who have all been trained in visual awareness. The Home is situated on the seafront at Frinton on Sea, a short distance from the town Centre with its friendly local shops.

If you would like to find out more about Read House or receive an Information Pack, please contact Tina.

How you can support us

Essex Blind Charity produces and distributes Spotlight free of charge. However, donations in time or money are always welcome. If you are a UK taxpayer, please consider filling in our gift aid form so we can claim back the tax paid on your donation, thereby allowing us to make even better use of your donation.

If you are writing or redrafting your will please consider leaving us a gift. Your support will enable us to continue to provide and develop the services we provide for people with sight loss throughout Essex. Thank you.

Gift Aid Declaration
On behalf of Essex Blind Charity
Registered Charity No. 1103732

The Gift Aid Scheme enables charities to make more of your donation by reclaiming the tax you have already paid. In order for us to make this claim on your donation(s) please complete this form and return it as soon as possible

Thank you!

Please treat the enclosed gift of £.....as a Gift Aid donation.

I confirm that I have paid or will pay an amount of Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax for the current tax year (6 April to 5 April) that is at least equal to the amount of tax that all charities and Community Amateur Sports Clubs that I donate to will reclaim on my gifts for the current tax year. I understand that other taxes such as VAT and Council Tax do not qualify. I understand the charity will reclaim 25p of tax on every £1 that I have given.

Title.....Forename(s).....Surname.....

Address.....

.....

.....

Post Code.....

I would like Essex Blind Charity to treat all donations I have made since 1 July 2012 as Gift Aid donations until I notify them otherwise.

Signature..... Date.....

Please return your completed form to:
Essex Blind Charity Read House, 23 The Esplanade
Frinton on Sea, Essex CO13 9AU

Are you on our mailing list?

If you are not already on our mailing list for ‘Spotlight’ and would like to receive a regular copy, please complete the form below and return it to Carol Massey at Essex Sight, 40 Osborne Street, Colchester CO2 7DB

Name.....

Address.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

Tel.....

How would you prefer to receive your copy?

Large Print..... Memory Stick.....Email.....

We would like to add your contact details to our database so that we may from time to time send you details of developments to our services, events taking place in your area and other information we feel may be of interest to you.

If you would prefer us not to do so, please tick here.....

We will not pass your details to anyone else without your permission.

You may request us to remove your details from our database at any time.

Useful Telephone Numbers

Colchester Eye Clinic contact numbers

To book or change a NEW appointment only
01206 286870 / 286871 / 286872

To enquire about or change a date for SURGERY only
01206 286874 / 286875

To book or change a FOLLOW UP appointment only
01206 286860 – Mr Sheldrick and Mr Mukherjee
01206 286863 – Mr Patel and Mr Bansal
01206 286856 – Mr Dimitriou
01206 286769 – Mrs Shenoy

For any enquiry relating to Secondary Optometry 01206 286868

For any enquiry relating to Orthoptics 01206 286866

For the EMERGENCY EYE CLINIC only 01206 286882
Please Note self-referrals are not accepted unless the patient is already under our care or has a pink card for the same condition.

Email the department on chu-ftr.opthalmologydepartment@nhs.net

Broomfields Eye Clinic (Chelmsford)

Appointments - 01245 513900
Diabetic Eye Screening - 01245 516707
Age Related Macular Clinic - 01245 514899
Ophthalmology Surgery waiting list - 01245 514767

Essex Sight Centres

Colchester Sight Centre

40 Osborne Street

Colchester

CO2 7DB

**Open Mon - Fri 10 am to 4 pm
by appointment only**

**Wednesdays 10am-12noon
drop-in session**

Tel: 01206 548196

Chelmsford Sight Centre

Chelmsford Central Library

Chelmsford County Hall

Market Road

Chelmsford CM1 1QH

First Friday of each month

10am - 1pm by appointment only

Tel: 01206 548196

Clacton Sight Centre

CADOWS

24 Old Road

Clacton-on-Sea CO15 1HX

**Second Thursday of each
month**

12 - 2pm by appointment only

Tel: 01206 548196

Maldon Sight Centre

Maldon Library

Carmelite House

White Horse Lane

Maldon CM9 5FW

First Tuesday of each month

10am - 1pm by appointment only

Tel: 01206 548196

For more information contact Essex Sight Office on 01206 548196.

Email: services@essexsight.org.uk

For information about permanent or respite residential care, contact:

Tina on 01255 673654

Email: info@essexblind.co.uk