



Spotlight

Autumn/Winter 2022

ISSUE 108

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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 6th January



The Editor writes:

Firstly, I must say sorry for the delay in this issue being edited and printed. The Essex Sight team have all been either self-isolating or be laid up in their sick beds. Now whilst I do have sympathy for them, it is also difficult to edit a newsletter when there is nothing to edit, so I have had to wait for them to return to health to be able to give me the articles to be included. Thankfully, there has been a lot to edit, and I've squeezed in as much in as possible (including three spotlight on articles), so without further ado, I shall hand over to the team, but not before wishing you all a Merry Christmas and a happy new year.

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

We have managed to soldier on throughout the pandemic, with the odd positive covid test, but without anyone feeling particularly unwell, but for the first time the entire community support team were hit by either flu or covid (or both), at the same time. This time, everyone was poorly and weeks on we still haven't fully recovered, but we are back in work again, thankfully.

We have been working on a Business Plan with Alison Oliver Consulting to help provide the best possible service for VI people in Essex in the future. The crucial part of the plan is to engage with you and understand what you think our service should be doing now and what we should or could be doing in the future to best help VI people. So, we need your help! We are developing a survey which we will be sending to you in the same format you currently receive spotlight (paper or electronic). If you would like the survey in a different format to make it easier to complete or would like a telephone survey, then just call us on 01206 548196 and we will make arrangements. We hope to get a good response as this will determine how we are going to help support you in the future.

Thanks to funding from the Provide Foundation via Essex Community Foundation to provide more support to visually impaired people on an outreach basis, we have opened three new pop-up sight centres. The first at South Woodham Ferrers Library, opened in August and has proven to be very popular. We had 13 people come to see us on the first morning session and were able to help them with information, resources and demonstrations of various low vision aids. The staff at the library have been most welcoming and are promoting our service to their clients. A big thank you to Adele, Sally, and the rest of the team. Thanks also go to Peter Blackman and the SWF Health & Social Care Group. If you want to visit, it takes place on the third Wednesday of each month from 10.30am – 12.30pm.

Our second new Sight Centre opened at the Dovercourt and Harwich Hub, which is located at 276 High Street, Dovercourt. The hub is operated by

Community Voluntary Services Tending and has a whole host of activities taking place there, so we were lucky to find a slot on the Third Thursday of each month from 10am – 12noon.

Following on from South Woodham Ferrers and Harwich, we were also very pleased to be able to secure a regular booking at the Jaywick Community & Resource Centre in Brooklands Gardens, another busy community facility. This takes place on the last Wednesday of each month 10am-11.30am.

And there's more ... after nearly two years where COVID interrupted so much of our outreach work, we are happy to say that our service at Broomfield Community Hospital has also recommenced. We have a desk in the reception area of the hospital and our staff and volunteers are on hand to offer information and support and will also have a small quantity of low vision aids we can demonstrate. Why not come and see us on the second Tuesday of each month, we are there from 10am-1pm.

I was recently asked by BBC Essex to comment on the state of pavements and how they affected visually impaired people. I am already aware of the broken and dangerous slabs in Colchester and have had feedback from people of how they have tripped or fallen.

Guide Dogs UK asked more than 750 blind or visually impaired people and found almost two-thirds had tripped or stumbled while walking. They approached the Local Government Association who stated, "The deterioration of our roads and pavements is down to decades of underfunding from successive governments, recent severe winters and widespread flooding". Whilst we all know local authorities have had less and less funding, surely something must be done to give a VI-person confidence in walking around town centers or their local area.

If you have had issues with poorly maintained pavements, why not let us know and we may be able to challenge the current repair schedule.

Spotlight On

Innovative Discover Wellbeing course for inherited sight loss community

Retina UK has launched an innovative course to help those living with inherited sight loss develop an awareness of emotional wellbeing and practical skills to adapt to life's ups and downs.

The course has been shaped by the lived experiences of people affected by inherited sight loss conditions.

The charity created the course in response to the findings of its 2019 Sight Loss Survey, which revealed that 92% of respondents experienced emotional or psychological impacts. When the survey was repeated in 2022, it showed an increase in people experiencing anxiety (78% in 2022 compared with 71% in 2019). The full report on the findings is available on the website in PDF, Word and audio formats: <https://bit.ly/3DlutRT>

Denise Rawden, Information and Support manager, said wellbeing is how comfortable, happy, and healthy we are.

She explained: "The findings of our Sight Loss Survey and the nature of calls and emails to our Helpline show us that many in our community experience poor emotional wellbeing. Understandably, the inherited and progressive nature of the conditions can take a real toll at different times in people's lives.

"We want to encourage open conversations about emotional health alongside the physical impacts of living with an inherited sight loss condition.

"Our Discover Wellbeing course will give people the tools they need to become more aware of their wellbeing and practical skills to maintain positive wellbeing."

There are three main courses to choose from and all are free to access:

1. Early stages – understand your feelings of apprehension and take positive practical steps to prepare for the future.
2. Living with change – understand your feelings of loss, adapt to a reduction in sight and take practical steps to live a positive life today.
3. Supporting others – learn practical skills and access tools to use to look after yourself whilst learning how to support others. This is designed for family members and professionals. It includes CPD (Continuing Professional Development) accreditation.

The charity worked in partnership with Arthur Ellis, a mental health and wellbeing organisation.

Founder Jon Manning said: “We were delighted to have the opportunity to work with Retina UK on this project. We worked closely with many people living with inherited sight loss to develop the course and we are grateful to all those shared their experiences with us.

“The course will guide people through the five stages of inherited sight loss and provide psychological and practical tools to enable them, their families, friends and professionals to provide the best support possible.”

Retina UK has trained a number of volunteers to become Wellbeing Support Team Members. They have lived experience of inherited sight loss and their role is to provide encouragement and guide people through the course.

More information on the course, and a link to register can be found at <https://bit.ly/3SLSlyp> or email wellbeing@retinauk.org.uk.

Retina UK is a national charity (registered number 1153851) working for people with inherited sight loss. They fund medical research to understand these complex conditions and speed up the search for treatments and they provide information and support services to help more people lead fulfilling lives. Retina UK has funded more than £16 million of research into inherited sight loss conditions in its 44-year history.

Sight Impairment and Employment Research

Vaishali Limbachia is a Junior Doctor at Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital. She is working with Usha Mistry, a Senior Lecturer at London South Bank University, and registered with severe sight impairment.

Together, they are conducting research on people over the age of 18 who have a vision impairment that cannot be corrected with glasses and want to know more about their experiences either working or looking for work.

The proposed title of their research is: "**Through *the lens of the visually impaired – an association of sight impairment and employment in the UK.***"

They have chosen this area to study because they are interested in employability and sight impairment and want to hear about people's experiences to bring about positive changes through conversation.

The survey is online and should take approximately 10 to 15 minutes to complete.

If you have a concern or want more information about the study, or would like further support in completing the form, please contact Usha Mistry by email at: mistryu2@lsbu.ac.uk

To take part in the survey, go to their website via the following link:

<https://bit.ly/3DNIDww>

Listening Month: What matters to you?

Thomas Pocklington Trust and Essex Sight loss council as part of Listening Month, are asking blind and partially sighted people to tell them what matters to them the most. They want this to be an open opportunity for blind and partially sighted people to have their say on all issues that are important to them, which will inform their future campaign work, services and work with partners. For more information or to take part head to their website here: bit.ly/3DIYEDK

News and Products

Donated Equipment

We have various donated/ex-demo items, including talking microwaves, daylight lamps, talking scales, talking clocks and watches, and other low vision aids. We also have a large number of audio books on CD. These items all work and are available free of charge. Please contact our Colchester Resource Centre for more information.

Essex Police Visual Impairment Procedure to safeguard VI People

The Visual Impairment Procedure which was developed in conjunction with Essex Sight Loss Council, helps safeguard visually impaired members of the community who need to confirm if a person at their door is a police officer.

Use of the procedure is optional, but it does add a layer of security and assurance when visual identification of a police officer by their uniform or warrant card is impractical.

Depending upon the reason for calling at your address, the officer may not need to come into your property. If it's appropriate, they may be able to discuss matters at the door, but you still have the option to use the Visual Impairment Procedure to verify their identity.

Who can use this service?

The procedure can be used by anyone with a visual impairment or anyone who cares for or supports someone who is visually impaired.

Those members of the community living with dual sensory loss can also use the protocol but depending on the severity of the hearing loss, it may be best that a carer or someone else in their support network, assists.

How does the procedure work?

You are safeguarded by verifying the identity of a police officer that has called at your address, before you let them into the premises. This verification is facilitated by the Police Contact Centre, either over the phone or by the attending officer using an agreed password.

When can the procedure be used?

There are two scenarios when the protocol can be used.

Firstly, when you or someone calling on your behalf, calls 1 0 1 or 9 9 9, you can ask the Police Contact Centre to use the procedure. In this scenario, a memorable one-time-password is chosen, and this is shared with the officer that is dispatched to your address. When the officer arrives, they will be expected to state the password to the person answering the door. If the officer cannot give the password, they should not be allowed into the property.

The procedure can also be applied in a second scenario where you have not initially called the police. In this scenario the officer's attendance could be planned, for example a pre-arranged appointment, or unplanned, such as spontaneous house-to-house enquiries. In either case, you would call 1 0 1 and confirm the identity of the officer by verifying their collar number, purpose for the visit, and a log number if this is available. If this information cannot be verified, the person at the door should not be allowed into the property.

Calling 1 0 1

The Police Contact Centre will answer 1 0 1 calls as soon as possible. At times of peak demand, there may be a short delay, so please be patient and keep your door closed and locked whilst making the call.

The officer may say that they will return in a few minutes to give you time to make the call. You should not feel pressured to hurry the process, the officer understands, and they will attend to other duties nearby.

Some notes on safety and security

It is always best to be cautious when answering the door to someone you don't know. Use a door chain or bar if one is fitted and never let anyone into your property if you are unsure of their identity.

All Essex Police officers have been briefed on the Visual Impairment Procedure and will understand when you ask them to wait outside while you use the protocol. A police officer will never insist on entering your property to wait while you make the call to confirm their identity.

An officer will never tell you that you don't need to verify their identity. If you wish to use the procedure, they will support you in doing this. They will not, however, offer you their own phone for you to make the necessary call.

The officer may ask for some time while they contact the Police Contact Centre to check information. Please allow them to do this as they may have been asked to attend your address at short notice. If something doesn't feel right though, and you are worried that the person at the door is not really a police officer, call 9 9 9.

Using police powers to enter your property

It is a police officer's duty to protect life. In an emergency, they may need to enter the premises without delay to achieve this.

Should any police officer have to enter your property without waiting for you to use the Visual Impairment Procedure, they will give clear instructions to you and anyone else in the property. The officer will describe events and ensure you are fully informed of what is happening.

Quiz

An Autumnal these to this edition.

1. Which date this year does autumn begin according to the astrological calendar?
2. Who wrote the 1819 poetic ode entitled 'To Autumn' which begins 'Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness'?
3. Which two animals (one feathered and one furry) are well known for burying acorns during the autumn season?
4. Hedgehogs also begin to hibernate during autumn, but what is the official term for a baby hedgehog?
5. What traditional name is given to the full moon nearest to the autumn equinox?
6. Which German city hosts the world-famous beer festival, Oktoberfest?
7. Guy Fawkes tried to blow up the Houses of Parliament on 5th November in which year?
8. What is the name of the green pigment in leaves, which decreases throughout autumn allowing the amber, red, and yellow colours to become prominent?
9. Which word was commonly used in England to describe the autumn season prior to the 18th century?
10. "I'm so glad that I live in a world where there are Octobers", is a line taken from which children's classic novel?
11. In In which country was the world's heaviest pumpkin grown in 2021?
12. Which flowers commonly known as Mums, are an autumn-flowering border plant?
13. The Autumn Internationals are contested by northern and southern hemisphere teams playing which sport?
14. What is the common name of the autumnal seeds of the *Aesculus hippocastanum*, used to make the world's longest caterpillar chain in 2018?
15. Which sign of the zodiac do people belong to if born between September 23-October 23, and if born between October 24–November 21?

Technology

Synapptic Version 9 released

Synapptic has now released a major update to their software. Version 9 of Synapptic includes 10 new features and can improve how your service users stay connected and remain independent, whatever your level of sight loss. The new version includes:

A completely redesigned and fully featured calendar for easier viewing and scheduling of appointments. Synchronisation of your calendar with other devices allow you to share your calendar with friends and family. All your valuable calendar entries are safely and securely copied to the Cloud in case you ever need to restore them onto a new phone or tablet.

New QR and Barcode reader allows you to scan QR codes and barcodes quickly and easily to follow links to websites or to find product details for food, books and other items.

Improved hand-held video magnifier feature to capture and view images more easily

Nuisance call and text blocker to block calls and text messages from unwanted numbers

Full details of all 10 new features are available on the website at www.synapptic.com

If you already have Synapptic, to upgrade to this latest version, just select the Updates option from the Synapptic Settings menu.

If your package has expired or you wish to purchase Synapptic, contact 0191 909 7 909, email sales@synapptic.com or visit the website at www.synapptic.com.

Entertainment

Vocal Eyes

Vocal Eyes believe that blind and visually impaired people should have the best possible opportunities to experience and enjoy art and heritage.

Their mission is to increase those opportunities, make them as good as possible, and ensure that as many blind and visually impaired people as possible are aware of them, and that the arts and heritage sector know how to create them, and welcome blind people as a core audience.

For more information about what's on near you or to subscribe to the What's On guide email: enquiries@vocaleyes.co.uk or telephone 020 7375 1043.

Unfortunately, this edition of Spotlight falls on the cusp of Vocal Eyes winter listing so the majority of their events are only listed to November, but the new listing will be out soon so keep checking their website or give them a call to find out what's on.

If you don't mind travelling, there is a major new exhibition called In Plain Sight at the Wellcome Collection, 183, Euston Road, London NW1 2BE, running until 12 February and is free. It explores the different ways we see and are seen by others. It questions the central place that sight holds in human society through the different experiences of sighted, partially sighted and blind people.

In Plain Sight will unfold across four themes: symbolism of the eye, bias in visual perception, eyewear and identity, and the interconnection between senses. It will examine the tools that shape how we view the world through historical and contemporary artworks and objects, including examples of eyewear from the 1600s to the present day, and scientific and medical items investigating visual perception. There will be a recorded audio descriptive guide, written and voiced in collaboration with the curators and artists featured in the exhibition. The guide will be available on handheld devices and accessible on smartphone via QR codes. To book a place contact 0207 611 2222.

Answers to quiz

1. 23 September 2022
2. John Keats
3. Jays and squirrels
4. Hoglet
5. Harvest moon
6. Munich
7. 1605
8. Chlorophyll
9. Fall was commonly used in England during the 17th century as a shortened version of the phrase falling of the leaves. It wasn't until the 18th century that autumn became widely used, having been derived from the French word automne.
10. Anne of Green Gables by L. M. Montgomery
11. Italy. The official weight of the pumpkin was 1,226 kg (2,702 lb 13.9 oz).
12. Chrysanthemums
13. Rugby Union
14. Conkers (horse chestnut seeds, which were strung together into a caterpillar chain measuring 341.2 metres long
15. Libra (Balance): September 23–October 23. Scorpius (Scorpion): October 24–November 21

Contact details

Helpline and office

01206 548196

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

Eye Clinic Liaison Officer

01206 548196

Christine (Colchester and Broomfield Hospital Eye Clinics)

Email: services@essexsight.org.uk

Read House

01255 673654

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.

For information about permanent or respite residential care, contact:
01255 673654 Email: info@readhouse.org

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

Brentwood Sight Centre
Brentwood Community Hospital
Crescent Drive
Brentwood CM15 8DR
Second Tuesday of each month
10am-1pm

Chelmsford Sight Centre
Chelmsford Central Library
Chelmsford County Hall
Market Road
Chelmsford CM1 1QH
First Friday of each month
10am-1pm by appointment only

Clacton Sight Centre
CADOWS
24 Old Road
Clacton-on-Sea CO15 1HX
Second Thursday of each month
12- 2pm by appointment only

Colchester Sight Centre
40 Osborne Street
Colchester CO2 7DB
Open Mon-Fri 10am to 4pm by appointment only
Wednesdays 10am-12noon drop-in session

Harwich Sight Centre
Dovercourt and Harwich Hub
276 High Street
Dovercourt
Harwich CO12 3PD
Third Thursday of each month
10am – 12noon

Jaywick Sight Centre
Jaywick Community & Resource Centre
Brooklands Gardens
Jaywick CO15 2JP
Last Wednesday of each month
10am-11.30am

Maldon Sight Centre
Maldon Library
Carmelite House
White Horse Lane
Maldon CM9 5FW
First Tuesday of each month
10am - 1pm by appointment only

South Woodham Ferrers Sight Centre
South Woodham Ferrers Library
Trinity Row
South Woodham Ferrers CM3 5JU
Third Wednesday of each month
10.30am – 12.30pm

For more information or to book an appointment tel: 01206 548196