Contact

sutton vision

ISSUE 79

Autumn 2022

Photo by Vicky Blencowe @VI_VickyPhoto

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Chair Welcome and Thanks

Welcome to the Autumn edition of CONTACT and we hope you enjoy our 79th edition. It's been a busy few months for the charity and it's been great to see many people returning and new faces enjoying our groups and activities.

We had a fantastic turnout for our Open Day and BBQ in August, where we showcased our services and activities. We were joined by Jo from the Citizens Advice Bureau and Ann from the Sensory Impairment Team, alongside our own staff, rounded off by a BBQ lunch in glorious sunshine.

This is quite a full edition for Autumn including an interview with our Outreach Officer Terry Rocks and member Pierre's account of his visit to Manchester to trial the latest video game for VI and blind gamers.

National Eye Health Week is 19th to 25th September. We'll be out and about at St Helier Hospital and Sutton High Street (you'll find the details in Sutton Vision Services and Events, page 16).

We're also putting a focus on maintaining eye health through simple changes to your lifestyle. As a charity that supports individuals to live with sight loss, we know how important self-care is in supporting your health. As the energy crisis looms, we have some tips to help you manage your bills this Winter and there is news of our Christmas activities for you to join us to celebrate the festive season.
As usual, we'd love to hear your comments about CONTACT magazine and contributions are always welcome. Please send these to our Editor at editor@suttonvision.org.uk

Michael

Message from our General Operations Manager

It has been a very hot summer and I wanted to say thank you to the team, our service users and volunteers for persevering through the heatwave.

I am pleased that we only had to cancel a couple of our activities due to the hot weather and we have been fortunate to be able to use our shaded courtyard garden for some of our social groups.

We have stayed busy despite the heat and held our first trip since COVID, visiting the service wing and gardens at Nonsuch Mansion in early August with our Social Eyes group. We'd like to say a big thank you to our volunteers Sheila, Pam and David for their help.

It was also lovely to welcome old and new faces to our open day and summer BBQ later in the month. We are now in the process of planning more activities and new groups for the Autumn.

We launched our new email newsletter in July, and I would really encourage everyone with an email to sign up.

We will continue to produce and send out Contact magazine in its current form every quarter, but our email newsletter comes out every other month which means we can update you on the latest news at Sutton Vision as well as let you know about dates and times of events that are planned after Contact goes to print.

Please email us at info@suttonvision.org.uk or give us a call on 02084097166 if you would like to be added to the mailing list.

Best wishes

Denise

Sutton Vision Services and Events

National Eye Health Week Events

This year's National Eye Health Week runs from 19th to 25th September 2022, promoting the importance of good eye health and the need for regular eye tests for all.

We'll be out at various events during the week to promote and raise awareness of the importance of keeping eyes healthy.

These events include our Eye Care Liaison Officer, Ann Ryan running an information stall at St Helier Hospital on Monday 19th September and if you can't make that date, our Outreach Officer, Terry Rocks will be by Waterstones with information on Friday 23rd September. Do come and say hello and find out more!

Outreach Service

Would you like to find out about what help you are entitled to as a blind or partially sighted person or support in accessing benefits, advice, advocacy and social activities?

Our Outreach service is here to help with a range of support, from Blue Badge applications to help with CV reviews.

This service is FREE and you can book an appointment to visit our Sutton offices or we can come to your home, if your access needs require this.

Our Outreach Officer can also be found at various events throughout the year, promoting the work of the charity.

For more information, please contact Terry Rocks on 020 8409 7166 or terryrocks@suttonvision.org.uk

Do you have unwanted gifts that need a new home?

We're looking for donations of unwanted gifts that would make prizes for our bingo session. If you have anything that would be suitable, then please email amandalarter@suttonvision.org.uk

Assistive Technology

Did you know that we can help you with making your mobile phone, tablet or laptop accessible? These devices can talk to you and you can instruct them with your voice as well as increase the text size.Come and find out how you can change the settings and learn how the in-built accessibility settings can read aloud, increase text size and contrast. You can even dictate your messages and use your voice to control all of these devices.

You can book a one to one or attend a Tech Talk or Tech Social (see our Social Groups and Activities section for the dates).
Please email or call Vicky Blencowe, Assistive Technology Coordinator on vicky.blencowe@suttonvision.org.uk or 020 8409 7166

Low Vision Clinic and Sight Loss Advice

Sutton Vision, in partnership with the NHS, runs a fortnightly Community Low Vision Clinic at our premises in Sutton. You will have an assessment with our Optometrist, to find solutions and establish which magnifying devices (if any) and other equipment will be most helpful, and speak to a specialist rehabilitation officer from the Sensory Impairment Team.

This service is available to people who have been diagnosed with low vision (a sight problem which is not correctable by spectacles), who live in the London Borough of Sutton and who are not already using the Low Vision Clinic at St Helier Hospital.

Our Low Vision Clinics are by appointment only. You can also access support at St Helier Hospital, when attending Eye Unit appointments. Ann Ryan, Eye Care Liaison Officer, is available to provide advice and information, tailored for your needs.
If you have any questions or queries about either service, please contact Ann Ryan on 07920 650 613 or annmarie.ryan1@nhs.net

Citizens Advice Bureau Energy Saving Talk

In October, we will have Sutton CAB joining us to help you save money on your bills as we face a cost-of-living crisis.

The date and time are to be confirmed, so if you are interested in this session, please email info@suttonvision.org.uk to be notified and booked for this session.

Christmas Meal and Quiz - save the date

Yes, this is our Autumn edition but we'd like to let you know of our plans for Christmas activities at Sutton Vision.

We will be hosting a Christmas quiz, with snacks and drinks, on Wednesday 19th December in the afternoon. Further details on this will follow nearer the date.

If you would be interested in joining us, then please email info@suttonvision.org.uk to register your interest.

Would you like more social support?

Our list is now open again for access to home visitors, walking buddies and telephone or face to face befrienders.

If you would like to find out more or sign up, please email Amanda Larter, Volunteer Coordinator, on 020 8409 7166.

Don't forget….

Clocks go back Sunday 30th October, 2am!

Social Groups & Activities

We have a varied and interesting programme of activities here at our building at 3 Robin Hood Lane, Sutton.

These are all free, although donations are very welcome too!
We are still taking care to make sure everyone is safe on their visit to Sutton Vision premises, providing hand sanitisers on tables on arrival.

Dates were correct at time of print, but please do ring to check sessions are on.
If you would like more information or to book a place, please call Amanda on 020 8409 7166.

Sutton Vision Coffee Morning / Social Eyes

An opportunity to come, relax and have a chat about...whatever you'd like, with a friendly group. As the name suggests, coffee, tea and even a biscuit is thrown in.

VI Scrabble

Come and have a game of Scrabble or two! Our large print and braille boards make the game more accessible, so a great opportunity to pit your wits.

Art and Craft

Let your creative juices flow with our art and craft group; paint, draw and more.

Charles Bonnet Support group

This group provides peer support for those affected by Charles Bonnet, as well as their family members and carers.
This is an opportunity to meet with others in a similar position and hear about the strategies used by group members to manage their visual hallucinations, caused by living with sight loss.

Lunchtime Quiz

Test your grey matter with our quiz, with rounds on different subjects and even some general knowledge

Tech Talk and Social

Want to make your smartphone, laptop and tablet work better for you? These sessions, with our Assistive Technology Coordinator can cover ways to make these accessible for visually impaired and blind people so you can use your tech to your full advantage.

Working Age Social Group

Chat, drink and eat at our monthly social for people of working age. This is held at Tiempo Lounge in Sutton, next to Waterstones.
A group will leave from our offices just before 4pm or you can meet us there; just drop in whenever suits you.

Bingo

Play to get a line or a full house and you might even win a prize! Join us for our lively game and a biscuit or two.

Resource Hub Drop-In

You can try the latest accessible technology at our Resource Hub Drop-In every Wednesday.Come in between 10am-1pm and you can use our tablets, mobiles and laptops, set up with accessibility in mind, with voice activation and larger print.

Assistive Technology and Wellbeing Zoom sessions

Sutton Vision are pleased to be part of the award-winning Rainbow Collaboration Group, presenting 2 sessions a month on Zoom.

The meetings can be joined online at us02web.zoom.us/j/4580437872, using Meeting ID: 458 043 7872

2nd Thursday of the month at 10am-11am on Zoom - "Live Well" sessions, with a guest speaker and information around wellbeing.
4th Thursday of the month at 10am-11am on Zoom - "Future Vision" workshop, showcasing the very best in assistive technology for people with sight loss.

We'll also be running the Zoom sessions on the large screen in our offices as a group, with tea and coffee offered.

For more information, email our Assistive Technology Coordinator, Vicky Blencowe vicky.blencowe@suttonvision.org.uk.

Macular Society Social Morning

Sutton Macular Group is back offering its monthly meetings for people living with Age Related Macular Degeneration (AMD) and their partners or carers.

The meetings, which take place on the second Monday of the month between 11am and 1pm, are held at Sutton Vision's offices in Robin Hood Lane. For people recently diagnosed with AMD, these meetings are an opportunity to learn more about the condition, pick up some helpful information and tips from people who are further along in their diagnosis.

Normally, membership fees and monthly contributions apply but, for the remainder of this year, no charges will be made.

Come along and join us for a cup of tea or coffee and friendly conversation, and find out more about what the Macular Society has to offer. Contact Information: www.suttonmaculargroup.wordpress.com suttonmacular@gmail.com or Diana Coman call 07970 525 143

October's social groups and activities

Monday 3rd October 10am-12pm	**SV Coffee Morning**
Wednesday 5th October 1.30pm-3.30pm	**VI Bingo**
Thursday 6th October 1pm-3pm	**Tech Talk - Samsung Accessibility - Help and advice to make your mobile and tablets accessible. Android only**

Monday 10th October 11am-1pm	**Macular Society Social Morning**
Monday 10th October 1pm-3pm	**VI Scrabble**
Wednesday 12th October 10.30am-12.30pm	**Crossword Group – NEW**
Thursday 13th October 10am-11am	**Livewell Zoom session at our office – plus tea and coffee**

Monday 17th October **12-2pm**	**Lunchtime Quiz**
Thursday 20th October **2-4pm**	**Social Eyes**
Monday 24th October **1pm-3pm**	**VI Scrabble**
Thursday 27th October **10am-11am** **1-3pm** **2-4pm** **4-7pm**	**Future Vision Zoom session – in Resource Room plus tea and coffee** **Art & Craft – Painting** **Tech Social - Let your iPhone read aloud to you! Find text too small? iPhone Voiceover demonstration and training** **Working Age Social @ Tiempo Lounge**

November's social groups and activities

Wednesday 2nd November **1.30pm-3.30pm**	**VI Bingo**
Thursday 3rd November **1-3pm**	**Tech Talk - Laptop accessibility – MacBook, Windows and Chrome.** **Make everything bigger and even read aloud!**

Monday 7th November **10am-12pm**	**SV Coffee Morning**
Wednesday 9th November **10.30am-12.30pm**	**Crossword Group – NEW**
Thursday 10th November **10am-11am**	**Livewell Zoom session at our office – plus tea and coffee**

Monday 14th November **11am-1pm** **1-3pm**	 **Macular Society Social Morning** **VI Scrabble**
Thursday 17th November **2-4pm** **2-4pm**	 **Social Eyes** **Tech Social - Audio books How to set up RNIB Reading Services Library and Amazon Audible on your device and Smart speaker AKA Alexa**

Monday 21st November **12-2pm**	**Lunchtime Quiz**
Thursday 24th November **10am-11am** **1-3pm** **4-7pm**	 **Future Vision Zoom session – in Resource Room plus tea and coffee** **Art & Craft – Christmas card making** **Working Age Social at The Tiempo Lounge**
Monday 28th November **1-3pm**	 **VI Scrabble**

December's social groups and activities

Thursday 1st December **1pm-3pm**	**Tech Talk - Getting around – public transport** **Have bus and train information in your pocket. Apple and Android.**

Monday 5th December **10am-12pm**	**SV Coffee Morning**
Wednesday 7th December **1.30pm-3.30pm**	**VI Bingo**
Thursday 8th December **10am-11am**	**Livewell Zoom session– in Resource Room plus tea, coffee and mince pies**

Monday 12th December **1-3pm**	**VI Scrabble**
Wednesday 14th December **10.30am-12.30pm**	**Crossword Group – NEW**
Thursday 15th December **2-4pm** **2-4pm** **4-7pm**	 **Social Eyes** **Gaming with smart speaker Alexa by just using your voice. Crosswords, storytelling and building empires!** **Christmas Working Age Social @ Tiempo Lounge**

Monday 19th December **12- 3pm**	**Lunchtime quiz & Christmas party**
Thursday 22nd December **10am-11am**	**Future Vision Zoom session – online only**

Ways you can maintain eye health

As we've mentioned earlier in Contact, we are marking National Eye Health Week in September.

Good eye health can be supported not only by medical advice but by self-care and some important lifestyle changes, courtesy of www.visionmatters.org.uk

Diet

Vitamins, minerals and carotenoids found in many fruits, vegetables and other wholesome foods can help protect your sight and keep your eyes healthy.
Studies show that an antioxidant called lutein can help prevent retinal damage. This can be found in foods such as broadleaf greens (kale and spinach), brightly coloured fruit and veg, like carrots, oranges, sweet peppers and broccoli, and eggs.

Exercise and eyesight

Along with a poor diet, lack of exercise can contribute to several eye conditions, especially in those aged 60 and over. By maintaining regular exercise, you may reduce the risk of sight loss from narrowing or hardening of the arteries, high blood pressure and diabetes.

Alcohol and smoking

Alcohol can, in moderate amounts, help reduce the risk of coronary heart disease. However, heavy or excessive drinking increases the risk of high blood pressure and stroke, which can all result in a loss of sight.

Smokers have the second highest risk of developing macular degeneration, behind that related to age. It can also restrict blood flow and increase your risk of developing cataracts so look to modify both these habits to give your eyes the best chance.

The sun

Sun protection is vital in protection of your eyes. Your sunglasses should have the CE mark on them which ensures that they are giving you the right level of ultraviolet protection.

Sight news

Humanware Demo Day

Humanware will be joining us for a Demo Day on Wednesday 26th October, 10am-2pm at our offices in 3 Robin Hood Lane, Sutton, Surrey, SM1 2SW.

Working for nearly 35 years, the company has developed more than 50 intelligent solutions to support those living with visual impairment and vision loss.

If you would like to attend, please email Terry Rocks at terryrocks@suttonvision.org.uk

Sight Village South East

This will take place on Tuesday 8th November 2022 - Kensington Town Hall, Hornton St, London W8 7NX. The event is free and for people of all ages and living with varying degrees of sight loss.

You can find out about the latest technology, products and support services available including audio equipment and services and screen enlargers / readers.

Pre-registration is recommended **HERE** or you can contact a member of the team on 0121 803 5484.

More details at: www.qac.ac.uk/exhibitions.htm

Coping with rising energy bills

As most of us will be facing rising energy bills this Autumn, with the energy cap being lifted again in October, ways to save money can be vital. Turn2Us and the BBC have looked at what will happen and how you can claim what you are entitled to.

All UK households will get a grant of £400 from October, with no requirement to repay.

This will be applied automatically, in monthly instalments over six months, with a reduction of £66 in October and November, and of £67 a month from December to March 2023

Direct debit and credit customers will have the money credited to their accounts. If you have a prepayment meter, money will be applied to the meter or paid via a voucher.

If you receive the Winter Fuel Payment - which is worth £200-£300 and is paid to nearly all homes with at least one person of pension age – you'll get an extra £300 in November or December.

Lower-income pensioners, who claim pension credit, will receive the money in addition to the £650 support for those on benefits which is mentioned below.

A £650 payment will be made if you receive the following benefits:

- Universal Credit,
- Income-based Jobseekers Allowance
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance,
- Income Support
- Working/child tax or pension credit

This will come in two instalments. The first should have been received in July for £326 and the second, of £324, paid in the autumn.

Those on tax credits will have the first payment in the autumn and the second instalment during the winter, will be paid into bank accounts and marked "DWP Cost of Living".

Those on disability benefits will receive £150 in September, which may be on top of the £650 payment.

Those on the following benefits will be entitled:

- Disability Living Allowance,
- Personal Independence Payment
- Attendance Allowance
- Armed Forces Independence Payment
- Constant Attendance Allowance
- War Pension Mobility Supplement

It's important to claim what you're entitled to but also check that you are on the best possible deal.

The Citizens Advice website has impartial advice
www.citizensadvice.org.uk/consumer/energy/energy-supply/

The amount you pay for your energy bills can vary for several reasons, including the way you pay for your gas and electricity, if you have a fixed tariff and if you use a prepay meter.

Take steps to cut your energy use

It's important to use what you need during this energy crisis but use energy efficiently. You'll find some helpful ideas to cut your energy use below:

- Cut your bills by turning the thermostat on your heating down by one degree and heating your home for one less hour a day.
- Stop heat escaping by sealing skirting boards, using draft excluders in front of doors and letterboxes and drawing your curtains after dark. Double-glazing reduces the heat loss through windows by 50%
- Save electricity by turning appliances off rather than leaving them on standby, unplug chargers and switch lights off when not in use
- Do not over fill kettles and always put lids on saucepans when cooking
- Only run washing machines, driers and dishwashers with a full load and use lower temperature settings.
- Insulating your loft and cavity walls, installing an energy efficient boiler and switching to low energy appliances will all help cut costs

Tech game testing at Manchester University

My name is Pierre Shlimon and I'm a 45-year-old member of Sutton Vision. I've been visually impaired for around 5 years now, with total sight loss, and I live in the local area.

This isn't my first article for Contact. I wrote a short article 3 or 4 years ago when using my long cane for the first time on local roads.

This time, I've made a trip possible from times I had spent on and off at Sutton Vision and my quite strong interest over the years in computers, technology and growing up playing computer games.

My invitation to go to Manchester University, stemmed from attending a few technology social meets at Sutton Vision.

I started listening on my landline phone to Zoom talks, especially useful during lockdown, by a group called the Rainbow Collaborative, of which Sutton Vision is a member.

This helped convince me to finally bite the bullet and get myself a mobile phone contract and smartphone. This enabled me to use it on this trip, as it was, at times, useful for navigation.

I was also keen to make this trip as I had previously visited the area, while flying on low-cost airlines. I had often day-tripped to places back then and had some nice Manchester memories. Visiting places like the Trafford Centre, Piccadilly Station, Manchester Airport and Salford Quay and having a coffee in Saint Peter's Square were all things I had not even remotely done since 2012. After 10 years, I wanted to try and maybe venture past London once again, although now without sight but still maybe day-tripping again.

The first part of the trip involved me signing up as a volunteer for some academic computer game research, advertised through email from the Rainbow Collaborative Group. Following that, I attended some Zoom meetings (again still using my landline phone) without the intention at that point of really physically going anywhere. However, the researchers set a date and venue, Thursday 16th June at Centurion House in Deansgate and offered to pay travel expenses. I joined 10 other testers from around the Manchester area.

The travel to Manchester was, as expected, very long at times but some planning before did help, along with breaks and having a driver, my brother, with a lot of stamina.

Pretty soon, I was being deposited and walked into Centurion House. It was a part of Manchester City Centre I had never visited before, but I was really glad to at least hear and feel it now after a 10 year hiatus. I felt in good hands whilst my brother (a football fan) got some time to search out Old Trafford and the Etihad Stadium, if not, to try and take a nap.

At the testing itself, it was great to meet people who I had met only through Zoom before and passing on regards from the team at Sutton Vision.

A few photos were taken and some video of us, the testers. We played the research game which they were developing and tried to give them some honest feedback.

I think we all did our best; some were better at playing a simple skill/ strategy experiment than others. The team conducting the research, I thought, could not have been nicer and more thankful for us being there. It is not often that someone says they are privileged to spend time with me!

We worked, ate and rested from 12pm until 5pm at the Deansgate office. This led to the slightly sad but inevitable goodbyes and for me, a long return drive as a passenger with my brother.

I want to give thanks to everyone who helped to arrange the visit and everyone who helps run things for the visually impaired in Sutton that I have come across since 2017. Just to be back again travelling out there after 10 years, with their thanks for coming. For me, I was thankful for a little bit of pure fun again!

I want to end by saying many thanks again. Although I may not be able to revisit Manchester or other places I used to travel to as often as I used to, at least, in terms of the travelling, I hope it only makes my heart grow fonder.

Volunteer News

We'd like to offer a welcome to new volunteers David, Nassim, Lindsey, Michael & Sophia, who have just joined the Sutton Vision team and hopefully, you will meet them as you visit our groups and activities.

We have a range of roles that we are looking to recruit for, including office admin support, social group call list, befriending, social group refreshments, quiz scribes, community events. The details for our roles can be found on our website www.suttonvision.org.uk, Volunteer Centre Sutton, Sutton Community Action & even on the info slot on Radio Jackie! You can also contact Volunteer Coordinator, Amanda Larter at amandalarter@suttonvision.org.uk.

Thank you to David, Dave and Nassim for attending our Emergency First Aid training. It was a very informative day and it's great to know we have this knowledge on hand, if we need it!

There is a Volunteer Befrienders Coffee Morning on Monday 26th September at 10am, if you are an existing befriending volunteer. This meeting is at Waterstones Café so join us for a coffee if you can.

Our last news is of the sad passing of volunteer Ann Pattison, who ran our quiz and was a telephone befriender, news & muse for 14 years. We pass our best wishes to her friends and family. She will be greatly missed by the whole team.

Community News

Library of Things

Sutton now has its very own Library of Things. It's a place where you can borrow useful things for your home, projects and adventures.
You'll can find the borrowing kiosk inside Sutton Central Library, St Nicholas Way, Sutton SM1 1EA
These include items for Cleaning, Cooking & Hosting, DIY and Gardening.
Browse the Things online at and make a reservation to borrow then return it when you're done.

Free Lung Health Check

Are you aged 55-74 and a smoker or ex-smoker living in Sutton?
Lung health checks are quick and simple. They're a good way of spotting lung-related problems early on, possibly before you've even noticed anything.
The West London Lung Health Check team is working with Age UK Sutton to help you get a lung health check.
Please contact Ravinder at Age UK Sutton on 07577 169285 or ravinder.saimbi@ageuksutton.org.uk.

New laws to protect disabled people travelling in taxis and private hire vehicles (PHV)

The Taxis and Private Hire Vehicles (Disabled Persons) Act amends the Equality Act 2010 to place duties on taxi drivers and PHV drivers and operators. This means disabled people have specific rights to receive assistance when using a taxi or PHV without being charged extra.
As part of the amendments, taxi and PHV drivers could face fines of up to £1,000 if they fail to provide reasonable mobility assistance to disabled passengers taking a pre-booked vehicle.
This will also ensure that visually impaired passengers will be assisted by drivers to help them identify or find the vehicle.
To find out more about the Act, visit www.gov.uk/government/publications/access-to-taxis-and-private-hire-vehicles-for-disabled-users

Terry James celebrates RNIB See Differently Award nomination

The RNIB See Differently Awards recognises and celebrates outstanding work to support people with sight loss.
Terry James, who volunteers for Merton Sports and Social Club for Visually Impaired People (MSSC), is registered blind and was shortlisted earlier in the year in the Volunteer of the Year category for her efforts. This is to mark her work in growing the membership of the Club, and for cultivating tandem cycling. She hopes that her nomination will encourage more people to join MSSC.
Congratulations to Terry and if you would like to find out more about MSSC, you can visit them at www.mssc.org.uk.

HumanForest

HumanForest is a shared dockless eBike scheme, launching 240 eBikes across Kingston and Sutton on September 8th, free for 10 minutes daily for everyone.

In consultation with London Vision, they aim to implement a number of measures to stop these becoming a hazard to visually impaired people in the boroughs. These include:

- Incentivising users with free parking to end their trip in locations approved by Council;
- GPS tracking on the eBikes to relocate bikes, causing an obstruction

They would welcome feedback via cs@humanforest.co.uk, 020 8157 7491 or humanforest.co.uk

Fundraising news

Amazon Smile and Ecclesiastical Society nominations

We have got many easy ways for you to support our work at Sutton Vision.

If you do your shopping at Amazon through Amazon Smile, it means we get 0.5% of eligible purchases (excluding VAT and other shipping fees). To choose us as your charity, all you need to do is visit: https://smile.amazon.co.uk/ch/1092429-0

You can also nominate us for a share of £120,000, across 120 charities with the Ecclesiastical Society 2022 Movement for Good Awards.

Nominating us is easy, you can just go to bit.ly/3PXYagN, scroll down the page and fill in the form. The charities with the most nominations will receive the money so please share with friends and family!

Take on 250

We are also joining with Visionary and 28 sight loss charities to invite people to take part in Take on 250.

The campaign will run throughout January 2023 and we're encouraging your participation!

You can choose any activity, whether it be baking, knitting, running, walking, or dancing and complete 250 minutes, 250 laps, or 250 repetitions – the choice is up to the individual or team, including their fundraising target.

We'll have more details in our Winter edition of Contact for you to get involved including information about our new Just Giving page which makes fundraising and donating online really easy.

Day in the life: Terry Rocks, Outreach Worker

Each Contact, we aim to shine a spotlight on what each of our staff do in a typical day. This time, Zac Randles spoke to Terry Rocks, who has worked as an Outreach Worker at Sutton Vision for nearly a year.

What does an Outreach Worker do?

It’s a very open job. My main role is to promote Sutton Vision in the community and bring new people to the charity. This involves attending local events such as the St. Helier Music and Community Festival. We’ve done about ten shows this year and that's really to just get our name out there so people know that we exist and know what services we provide.

I will do one to one support for people around employment, claiming benefits and general advice. They might also need help getting a disabled badge, applying for PIP or Attendance Allowance so I help with that. It’s a very varied job, I meet a lot of people, and do a lot of one to ones.

What is your favourite aspect of your job?

I enjoy the going out and about, doing the events and group activities. I've set up a few groups here, including one for Charles Bonnet syndrome and I’m in the process of setting up a glaucoma group.

I enjoy liaising with different professionals from other organisations and charities. It's good for us to communicate to see if they're doing something that we could as well. Then we could do better to attract more people in.

What did you do before you joined Sutton Vision?

I was originally a manager for about 36 years working in Adult Social Care; most recently, training. When lockdown hit, I took a voluntary redundancy, then this job came up so I ended up here, doing something a bit different.

What are the challenges of working while visually impaired?

I don't think there are any for me. I mean, I've been visually impaired since I was five and I think I've adapted to it really well. I can get around okay, I don't use any aids. I don't use a stick or anything like that. Even though I'm registered blind, my vision's good enough to kind of get around. It's never really been a barrier for me.

What are the main barriers to the job?

I think the main barriers are people's attitudes towards blind and disabled people. There's a lot of discrimination still out there. It's not really raised that much, I've known friends that have had been assaulted in lockdown and stuff like that, because their guide dog walked into someone and they weren't two meters apart.

Also, when you're talking to someone and they realise you can't see them, their expression and tone of voice changes. I think there's still a lot to do that can change people's attitudes, not just for the visually impaired but for all disabilities.

Do you see people's attitudes towards themselves change when they develop an eye condition?

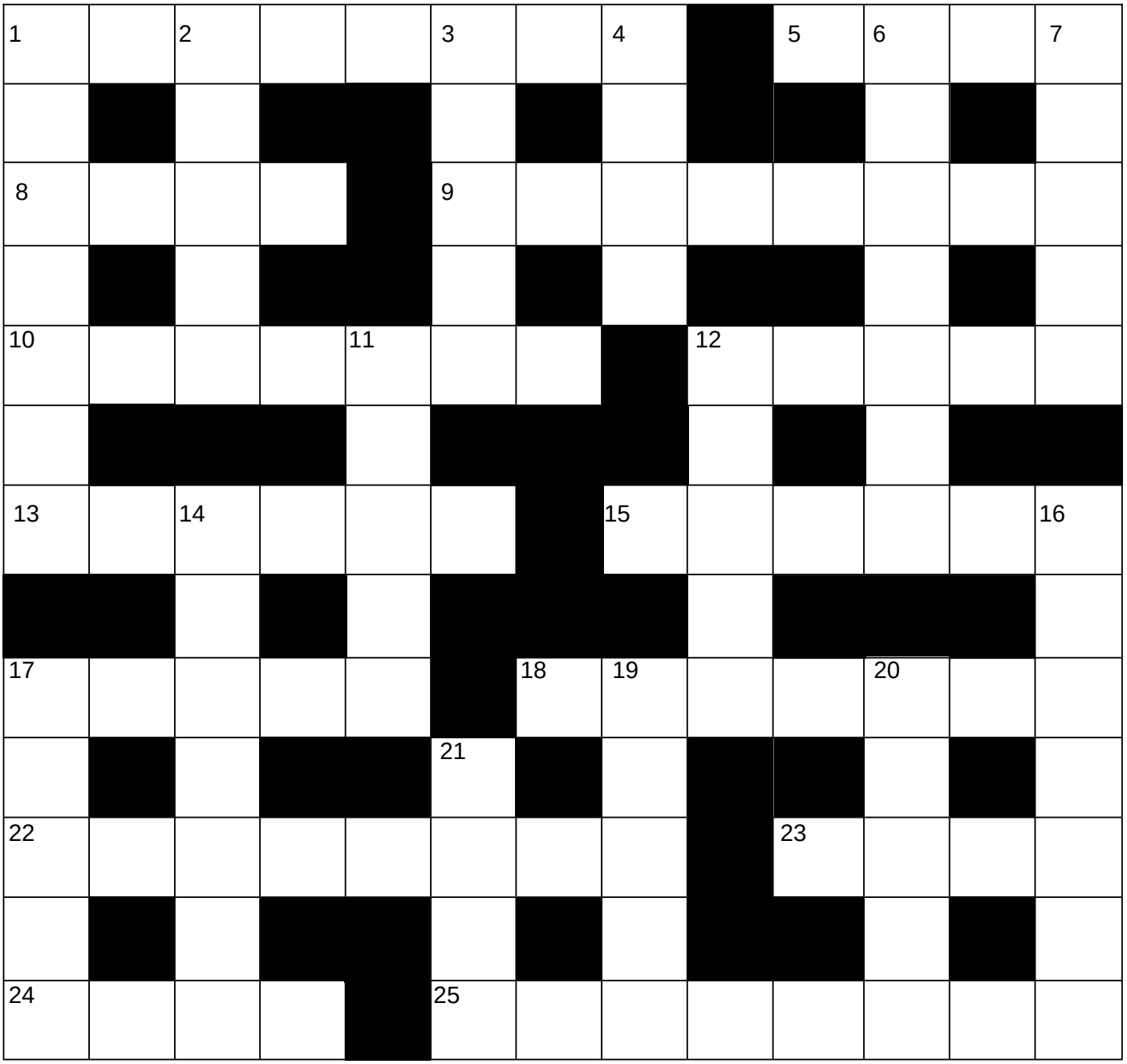
Yeah, I think that people lose confidence. We've had a lot of people who don't really go out of their houses and don't really know what's available out there for them to help. Another bit of my role is to make sure that they're getting that support, and working closely with the Sutton Council's Sensory Impairment Team.

I think confidence is a big thing when your eyesight goes completely, then you're obviously very scared. You're worried about being vulnerable to other people, going out or even being in the house, with fear of tripping over furniture, for example.

Do you have any memorable experiences you want to share?

I have worked with people who haven't left the house for a long while but now attend groups. They just need that little bit of confidence. They're now keen to come in and do stuff with us and get involved in projects. To me, that's big and that kind of sums up everything I do.

Crossword



Crossword Clues (answers on page 31)

ACROSS

1. Vegetable strips (8)
5. Clock face (4)
8. Snare (4)
9. Cut of meat (4,4)
10. Allure (7)
12. Islamic holy book (5)
13. Wreckage (6)
15. Former American president (6)
17. Censure (5)
18. Poison (7)
22. American state (8)
23. Monster (4)
24. Besides (4)
25. Prime number (8)

DOWN

1. European peninsula (7)
2. Jumped (5)
3. Children's charity (5)
4. Greyish-yellow (4)
6. Receive from will (7)
7. Garden flower (5)
11. Nimble (5)
12. Australian 'bear' (5)
14. John, Paul, Ringo and George (7)
16. Principal girls' school (7)
17. Skint (5)
19. Long for (5)
20. Fireplace (5)
21. Naming word (4)

VI Leisure Group (VILG)

The VILG organises its own programme and acts as the point of contact for participants. Although Sutton Vision supports and encourages the VILG and their activities, those taking part should be aware that any events organised directly by the VILG are independent of Sutton Vision and are the responsibility of the VILG only.
They are peer led and always welcome new ideas for groups so if you have any suggestions or are interested in finding out more, please contact Sue Christie on 07891 783291 or e-mail susanannchristie@gmail.com.

Event	Date	Venue
VI Leisure Group Coffee Morning Waterstones	**1st Friday of each month from 10.30am**	**Waterstones Book Shop, High Street, Sutton**
VI Leisure Group Book Club	**4th Monday of each month from 10.30am.**	**Waterstones Book Shop, High Street, Sutton**
VI Leisure Group The Hope Pub	**1st Monday of each month from 12.30pm**	**The Hope Pub, 48 West Street, Carshalton**

Crossword Answers

ACROSS

1. Julienne
5. Dial
8. Trap
9. Pork Chop
10. Attract
12. Koran
13. Debris
15. Carter
17. Blame
18. Cyanide
22. Oklahoma
23. Ogre
24. Else
25. Nineteen

DOWN

1. Jutland
2. Leapt
3. NSPCC
4. Ecru
6. Inherit
7. Lupin
11. Agile
12. Koala
14. Beatles
16. Roedean
17. Broke
19. Yearn
20. Ingle
21. Noun

Useful Telephone Numbers

The following list of useful numbers includes an emergency number for the London Borough of Sutton and St Helier Hospital Eye Unit.

Advice Link Partnership Sutton (ALPS)		020 8254 2616
Age UK (Sutton)		020 8078 0002
Friendly Club		020 8669 4106
London Borough of Sutton		020 8770 5000
LB Sutton Referral Point		020 8770 4565
Macular Society (National)		01264 350 551
Macular Society (Sutton)		07970 525 143
Merton Sports & Social Club		info@mssc.org.uk
RNIB Helpline		0303 123 9999
St Helier Hospital Eye Unit		020 8296 3800
St Helier Hospital Eye Unit	EMERGENCY	020 8296 3817
Sight Loss Adviser, Ann Ryan		07920 650 613
Sutton Carers' Centre		020 8296 5611
Sutton Talking Newspaper		020 3759 6679
Sutton South Hello		07790 031 764

Our address is 3 Robin Hood Lane, Sutton, Surrey, SM1 2SW