Contact

sutton vision

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Spring 2023

Photo by Vicky Blencowe @VI_VickyPhoto

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Chair Welcome and Thanks

Welcome to the Spring 2023 edition of CONTACT.

We've had a very busy few months and, as you may remember from our last CONTACT, we've undertaken our Take on 250 campaign, with great success! Thank you to everyone who supported or took part. You can find out about all our efforts on page 14.

We are pleased to launch individual giving, which gives you the opportunity to support us financially through one off or regular donations. This will not only help the charity as a whole but make sure we can offer our services as more people need our input in the future. More on that on page 15.

I was delighted to attend a cheque presentation from the Hope Pub in West Street, Carshalton. The staff and patrons raised a fantastic £600, adding to the total of support they have shown the charity over the years. A big thank you to them!

We also have many new and returning groups including a Knit and Natter, Glaucoma UK and even a Summer trip out. It has been great seeing more people attending our talks and groups and we hope to build on this throughout the summer.

And, if you have seen our regular plug for our telephone befriending service, and wondered how this all works, then you can find out more in our article, written by one of our befrienders, on page 16.

We often have to send Contact to press before we have all the dates agreed for the coming quarter so please do let us know if you have an email address and would like to sign up to our e-newsletter. This will enable us to let you know about our latest news, events and social activities between editions of our printed magazine.

As usual, we'd love to hear from you with your comments and contributions. Please send these to our Editor at editor@suttonvision.org.uk

Michael

Message from our General Operations Manager

After a long and cold winter, I am delighted the evenings are getting lighter and the weather is improving. We have some great new activities planned for the coming months. We were fortunate enough to have been selected through the Tesco blue token scheme to receive some funding for our patio and garden space. Thank you to everyone who voted for us. We have received £1,000, which is great news and will enable us to rejuvenate our garden which suffered dreadfully in the heat last year.

I was delighted to be able to accompany our first theatre group outing to the King and I at New Wimbledon Theatre. It was a great production. We will be planning another trip later in the year so do get in touch with Caroline if you would like to add your name to the list.

It was great to have the NHS attend one of our coffee morning events in February, to provide information about accessing health services and staying well over the winter months and to offer catch-up COVID and flu vaccinations for anyone needing them. We hope to offer a similar “pop up” vaccination clinic once we have further information about the COVID spring booster.

Our thanks to Trudy Richards, Environmental Protection Officer with Trading Standards at Sutton Council, for coming to talk to us about scams, their various forms and how to protect yourself and report these. It was a great source of information and we hope to do more talks on other subjects in the near future.

We are so grateful to our volunteers who make all our activities, regular groups and befriending support possible. I really hope all of you will be able to join us at our Volunteer BBQ in June to thank you for all your help over the past year.

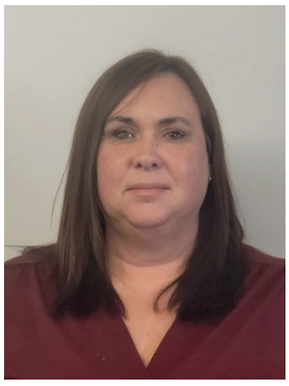
Best wishes

Denise

Contact Us

Our office number is 020 8409 7166. If you want to email individual members of staff, please see their details below.

General Operations Manager
Denise Crone
denisecrone@suttonvision.org.uk



Volunteer Coordinator
Amanda Larter
amandalarter@suttonvision.org.uk

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Outreach Worker
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Eye Care Liaison Officer
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07920 650613

Assistive Technology Coordinator
Vicky Blencowe
vicky.blencowe@suttonvision.org.uk

Sutton Vision Services

Community Low Vision Clinic

Our Community Low Vision Clinic runs fortnightly at our office in Sutton. These appointments give you the opportunity to speak to a specialist rehabilitation officer from the Sensory Impairment Team and have an assessment with our Optometrist.

To be eligible for this service, you need to have been diagnosed with low vision (a sight problem which is not correctable by spectacles), be living in the London Borough of Sutton and not already using the Low Vision Clinic at St Helier Hospital.

If you would like to find out if you could benefit from this service, contact Ann Ryan on 07920 650 613 or annmarie.ryan1@nhs.net

Is your technology accessible to you?

Assistive Technology enables you to continue to access your mobile phone, tablet or laptop when you're living with sight loss.
Our Assistive Technology Coordinator can walk you through your options include magnification, speech software and more.
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 contact Vicky Blencowe.

Help and support through our Outreach Service

Find out what help you are entitled to as a blind or partially sighted person; from accessing benefits, advice to social activities.
Our adviser can see you in our office or at home and the service is FREE.
For more information, please contact Terry Rocks.

Would you like more social support?

We have home visitors, walking buddies and telephone or face to face befrienders. If you would like to find out more or sign up, please speak to Amanda Larter.

Events and new activities for April to June 2023

Living with Sight Loss Workshop

Being told you have sight loss can be scary and confusing for both you and your family but talking to people in a similar situation can really help. Our free Living with Sight Loss workshops are for people adjusting to life with visual impairment. These sessions cover:

- Dealing with barriers and coping techniques
- Access to benefits and services
- Using assistive technology
- Practical solutions for around the home

One attendee told us: "It was good to meet in a small group, share experiences and learn new things." We will be running our next workshop on Thursday 30th May, from 10am to 2pm and a sandwich lunch is included. For more information, or to book a place, contact Terry Rocks.

South West London Working Age Forum

The South West London Working Age Forum is run every month and includes the various vision charities in South West London. Please contact odette.battarel@croydonvision.org.uk for Croydon and susie.meade@mertonvision.org.uk for Merton.

- Tuesday 25th April at Merton Vision offices, 6.30pm - 9pm. Pie & Mash with karaoke to celebrate St. George's Day.
- Tuesday 16th May at Croydon Vision and travelling to Tenpin Croydon in Purley Way, 11am - 1.30pm.
- Wednesday 21st June – The Longest Day Picnic at Morden Hall Park, 12pm - 2.20pm

Glaucoma UK Group

Glaucoma UK returns to Sutton Vision on Monday 24th April 10.30am - 12.30pm, with speakers Dr Akanksha Bagchi and Adam Kensett. Attendees will also be given the opportunity to ask questions and meet other people affected by Glaucoma. Please contact Terry for more information.

Professional Vision Services Demo Day

Come along to this low vision drop-in day, when all the latest technology and equipment for the visually impaired will be demonstrated. It will take place on Wednesday 21st June from 10am – 2pm at our offices. Advance booking is essential.

Among the equipment being displayed will be filters, anti-glare & contrast enhancement, folding, electronic, hand magnifiers and more.

One service user told us the purchase of her reader “is worth every penny, especially if you’re alone. It is useful for reading documents such as letters, instructions for assembly of items or even the care of devices and gadgets. It has made me more independent.” To book a place, please call or email Terry.

Coronation Afternoon Tea

To mark the coronation of His Majesty Charles III, we will be holding an afternoon tea on Friday 5th May. If you would be interested in coming, pre-booking is required so we can cater for the numbers that attend. Please contact Caroline.

Summer Coach Trip

We will be organising a coach trip in the summer months from the Sutton Vision offices with dates and place to be confirmed, nearer the time. There will be a charge for the coach. If you would be interested in attending, please contact Caroline.

Gardening Group

We will be starting a gardening group this summer. There will be opportunities to tend to our new sensory garden or to just sit and enjoy the outdoors.

Cinema and Theatre group

The first trip of our new cinema group on Wednesday 18th January was a great success. 12 people watched The Lost King and one attendee said: “What a lovely way to spend a dreary Wednesday morning! We had volunteers to help us get to the cinema from the office, plus coffee and biscuits provided. Earphones were provided to help describe what was happening and to help some of us to hear better. It was a lovely, informative film and a very pleasant morning, plus meeting up with some other members was an added pleasure.”

You will need to pay for the price of your ticket, but sighted volunteers will attend to support you.
If you would like to join us for our next visit on Wednesday 26th April to see A Man Named Otto, starring Tom Hanks, please contact Caroline.

Knit and Natter Group

Do you like to knit and have a chat? Then why not join our new group? Whether you’re a beginner or an expert, have a project or would like to help us make squares for blankets for those in need, you’re very welcome!
This group will run on the last Thursday of each month, 1.30pm - 3.30pm. As a result, Art and Craft will have a little break and be back later in the year.

Large Print Bridge

We are looking to start a bridge group, accessible to those living with visual impairment, using larger cards. Great for the mind and to socialise too!

If you are interested in joining Gardening, Knit and Natter or Large Print Bridge, please contact Amanda.

Day in the Life: Amanda Larter, Volunteer Coordinator

Each Contact, we aim to speak to one of our staff and find out what they do in a typical day. This time, we spoke to Amanda Larter, who works as our Volunteer Coordinator.

What does a Volunteer Coordinator do?

My role is quite varied and includes recruiting and interviewing new volunteers, taking up, references, carrying out DBS checks and matching or placing individual volunteers.

I run our volunteer induction programme and organise volunteer networking and training, including planning regular volunteer coffee mornings and running the Volunteers' Week appreciation event in June. I also coordinate all social groups and befriending volunteers.

What is your favourite aspect of your job?

For me, the best part is being able to meet new volunteers from all walks of life.

What did you do before you joined Sutton Vision?

I worked in construction for ten years as secretary to Project Managers & Surveyors.
After being registered with sight loss in 2012, I was made redundant and attended a residential course at the Royal National College for the Blind (RNC) in Hereford, where I completed a complementary therapy course for 6 months, followed by a 6 months' work placement at St Raphael's Hospice, supporting their Jubilee Centre with massage and reflexology.
I started working at Sutton Vision in 2015, in my current role.

What are the challenges of working while visually impaired?

My sight loss started over 20 years ago. I have Uveitis & Fuchs' Dystrophy in my sighted eye, the right eye totally blind.
In my work, the challenge is constantly adapting the way I work as my sight condition varies. This has meant going from magnification of my computer, for example, to moving to speech software.

What impact do you feel the volunteers make to service users?

Our volunteers support every area of our work, including hosting social groups, supporting outings, offering technology help, befriending, attending community events, driving and helping with office administration. Their support is vital to us delivering sessions and working as a charity and it would be great to hear from you, if you have a few hours to give. As you can see, we have lots of opportunities and always welcome more support and new faces!

If you or someone you know have some spare time and would like to take part in any of these activities, please contact Amanda Larter at amandalarter@suttonvision.org.uk or call 020 8409 7166 us to find out more.

Do you have unwanted presents that we could use as prizes?

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 contact Amanda.

Would you like tuition in learning braille?

We have a volunteer that can offer one to one support in learning braille, at your pace. If you are interested in this, please contact Amanda.

Volunteer News

We would like to welcome our new volunteers Steve, Jan & Eklima, who will be joining the Sutton Vision Team from March and will be supporting us with befriending & social groups.

Sutton Vision will be taking part in a volunteer recruitment event called The Big Help Out on Tuesday 18th April at Sutton Library. If you are interested, then please attend this event or you can find out more at www.suttonvision.org.uk/volunteering-vacancies

Our volunteer roles are diverse and include befriending, social activities, accessible technology support, walking buddies, outings, admin, working age events for VI people, minibus and general driving and supporting at community awareness events. We're also pleased to announce there are new groups hosted by our volunteers starting soon – Knit & Natter and Gardening Club, which will also be offered as a volunteer opportunity.

The next Volunteer Befrienders' Coffee Morning will be on Tuesday 25th April 10.30am - 12.30pm at the Sutton Vision offices. This gives us all the opportunity for a catchup with each other and an update on your befriending role.

We will be contacting volunteers to arrange refresher Sight Guide Training, initially for outings that we are planning this year, including our new Cinema & Theatre Group. Please let us know if you are a volunteer and would like to attend this refresher training. Last but not least, we ask you to save the date for our usual marking of Volunteers Week, 1st - 7th June 2023. This year, we will be inviting our volunteers to a summer BBQ on Thursday 1st June (times to be confirmed)

Fundraising News

Take on 250

We're very pleased to announce the success of our Take on 250 fundraising challenge. Throughout January, trustees and staff ran, cycled, walked and even stepped towards their targets.

Along with Visionary and 28 sight loss charities, the campaign aimed to raise money as well as awareness of the fact that, in the UK, 250 people begin to lose their sight every day. Through grit, determination and a lot of effort, a total of over £9,000 was raised!
You can find out some of the stories of how this was raised below:

Trustee **Anthony Richman** has been putting his personal training skills to good use through 'PT250'.

This has involved running classes with attendees, who amongst other exercises have been tasked with doing 250 reps, in exchange for a donation to the campaign.

Juliet Milgate, our newest trustee, committed to 250km of walking and cycling. She tells us: "The challenge was tough in the early cold days, but by the end of the month I was loving my daily walks and have felt much better for it, it really does help your mood! Thanks to everyone who sponsored me and well done to everyone who took on the 250 challenge in January. It was fun!"

Graham Randles, also on our trustee board, cycled 250km over eight rides, including a 20km trip taking in Chipstead, Wallington, Woodmansterne, Banstead and Carshalton Beeches plus longer rides to Box Hill and to Richmond Park via the River Thames.

Louisa Syrett, the charity's vice chair, shared on social media:
"These feet have walked over 250km during the month of January as part of my #TakeOn250 challenge for Sutton Vision. A huge thanks to all who donated, I am humbled by your generosity"

Individual Giving

Dear Sutton Vision Community and their families and friends,

Since 1965, Sutton Vision has been supporting people living with blindness and vision impairment. Over the last 12 months, we have supported over 500 people, and we anticipate that this number will grow by around 25% over the next 10 years as the population ages. As we age, it is normal to experience changes in your vision, which can be corrected easily with glasses. Other people may experience conditions such as cataract, glaucoma or age-related macular degeneration.

For individuals directly affected by sight loss, their families and their friends, Sutton Vision is a charity that offers tailored support to individual needs. All our services are free to access for EVERYONE, individuals directly affected by sight loss, their families and their friends.
We have no plans for this to change. But we need the support of the whole Sutton Vision community to continue to provide these services. We know there are already several individuals, family and friends who already donate to our services, for which we are eternally grateful, but the demand for our services continues to increase. To make sure we can continue to meet this need, we have to raise over one hundred thousand pounds every year. We really need your support to reach this goal; the success of our work depends on the kindness of our supporters.

If you would like to set up a one-off or regular donation, please visit our website where you can donate securely at: https://app.donorfy.com/form/296OXKZ337/4CJR1 or contact Denise directly.

I want to thank everyone for all their continued support of Sutton Vision.

Best wishes, Michael

Have you ever wondered about telephone befriending?

You may have often seen telephone befriending mentioned in CONTACT but wondered if this is a service that can support or help you. Adrian Andrews has worked as a volunteer befriender for just over eight years and gives his insights into the role. A typical week sees me make phone calls, normally on a Thursday and on a Friday morning. There's a real mix of men and women and the youngest person I speak to currently is 67 and the oldest is just over 100 years old.

I enjoy talking to everybody, regardless of their age, background or situation. This can be people living in care homes, alone in their own home or even living with family members. We can speak weekly or fortnightly and some choose to have a shorter check in of a few minutes, whereas with a couple of others I will regularly be talking for over an hour each time I call. This decision is made by the person accessing the service and this may change each time we talk. Some people like to talk about TV programmes that they have seen or books that they have read, others talk about themselves or ask me about what I have been up to.

Being severely visually impaired myself, diagnosed with retinitis pigmentosa in 1991, when I was age 32, I have a certain amount of understanding and feeling with talking to those living with a visual impairment. Everybody's eye conditions are different but there can be similar experiences, in what can help or frustrates. I am not there to offer medical advice but I can share, if people want, my own experience, journey and the tips and gadgets that have helped me.

Anything that is said to me in one of these calls is confidential, with the only exception being if I felt there was a risk or safeguarding issue that I need to report to the Sutton Vision office. I think it is important that people know and understand that. Hopefully, this means the people I speak to feel they can vent about issues to a sympathetic person, without concern about this being revealed to anyone.

When I pick the phone up on a Thursday morning, I never know what I'm going to talk about or for how long but it doesn't matter. What is important is that I, and the other telephone befrienders, are here for you if you think this would help. So why not give us a try?

If you would like to speak to a telephone befriender, please contact our Volunteer Coordinator, Amanda Larter, on 020 8409 7166.

Community News

Sutton Community Project

The project is run by volunteers in the London Borough of Sutton, distributing free, fresh, healthy food boxes donated by the Felix Project, local food stores, supermarkets and other local charity groups.
It also provides a place which brings people together, to connect and learn new skills. Support is open to everyone and weekly distributed food boxes contain plenty of fresh fruit, vegetables, and other items.
Food boxes are distributed every Tuesday 2 - 6pm at the Thomas Wall Centre in Sutton but those interested must fill in their form online at suttoncommunityproject.com/get-support.

Employment Webinars

Blind Ambition, in conjunction with RNIB, are aiming to help as many jobseekers with sight loss as they can to get to the next stage of their career. This could be finding a new role, entering employment, starting an apprenticeship or starting up a new business.

Their employment webinars will cover a range of topics, from help with CV writing, different ways to market yourself, interview tips and much more. You can find out more: www.blindambition.co.uk/employment-webinars

VIP Book Club and Coffee Morning

Do you enjoy books and would you like to access them in audio form? Sutton Library runs a VIP Book Club and Coffee Morning every two months, on Friday mornings. Sessions have facilitators to lead you through books that are available on CD and a synopsis of the book. These are then offered on loan free of charge until the next group. Coffee and biscuits are offered, with the only requirement being a library card/ Membership can be arranged, if needed.

To find out more, please email colin.todd@sutton.gov.uk for more details.

What help with transport are you entitled to?

If you live with sight loss, there are several options to support you with the cost of travel and to provide transport for you, including Taxicard, Dial-A-Ride, Freedom Pass and the Blue Badge Scheme. We discuss the various options below and the criteria for you to access these supported transport options.

Taxicard

This scheme is for residents of the 32 London boroughs, who find it difficult or impossible to use public transport, such as buses and tubes, due to permanent or long-term mobility or visual impairments.
If you're eligible, it provides subsidised transport in taxis (Black Cabs) and private hire vehicles (mini-cabs).

You are automatically eligible for a Taxicard in the London Borough of Sutton if you:

- Receive the Higher Rate Mobility Component of the Disability Living Allowance
- Receive 8 points or more for the Moving Around Activity component of the Personal Independence Payment
- Are registered severely sight impaired or blind (not partially sighted)
- Receive a War Pension Mobility Supplement
- Receive the Armed Forces Independence Payment (mobility element)
- Receive Higher Rate Attendance Allowance

If you are not in one of the above categories you may still be eligible, but you will need to complete an application form and provide medical evidence. You may be required to have a mobility assessment.
The process takes between 6-8 weeks for the application process. If you are eligible, you are entitled to 104 trips per year. Trips will have a £9.50 maximum subsidy per trip, with a minimum fare cost of £3.50.

Double swiping is allowed, which enables users to use two trip allocations to cover one long journey. More details and how to apply at:
londoncouncils.gov.uk/services/taxicard

Freedom Pass

A disabled person's Freedom Pass allows free travel on public transport across London and local bus journeys nationally.

You can apply for a disabled person's Freedom Pass if you:

- are blind or partially sighted
- are profoundly or severely deaf
- are without speech
- have a disability, or have suffered an injury, which has left you with a substantial and long-term adverse effect on your ability to walk
- have applied for a driving licence under the Road Traffic Act and your application would be refused on the grounds of medical fitness

If you have an eligible disability, you may be able to get a Disabled Person's Freedom Pass.

Blue Badge

Blue Badges help people with disabilities or health conditions park closer to their destination. You can apply for a badge for yourself, or on behalf of somebody else.

You automatically qualify for a Blue Badge if one of the following applies:

- you receive the higher rate of the mobility component of the Disability Living Allowance (DLA)
- you receive a Personal Independence Payment (PIP) because you can't walk more than 50 metres
- you are registered blind (severely sight impaired)

You may be eligible for a badge if one or more of the following applies:

- you cannot walk at all
- you cannot walk without help from someone else or using mobility aids
- you find walking very difficult due to pain, breathlessness or the time it takes
- walking is dangerous to your health and safety

You can apply for or renew a blue badge and see the full criteria at www.gov.uk/apply-blue-badge. There is a £10 charge that is refunded if your application isn't successful.

Dial a Ride

Dial-a-Ride is a free, door-to-door transport service provided by Transport for London for older and disabled people who can't always use public transport.

They run a bus service, which means you will often travel with other customers going to a variety of different places.Services run between 6am and 2am, 365 days a year, but to use Dial-a-Ride you will usually have to book ahead.
The service is ideal for local trips, such to the shops, visiting family or friends or medical appointments.
You need to be a member to use the service, which requires you to have a permanent or long-term disability, stopping you using public transport.

You are automatically eligible for membership if you are:

- A Taxicard member
- Getting the Higher Rate Mobility Component of Disability Living Allowance
- Getting the Standard or Enhanced Mobility Rate of the Personal Independence Payment (PIP)
- Registered blind or partially sighted
- Aged 85 or over
- Getting a Higher Rate Attendance Allowance

If you don't fit the criteria above, you may still be able to join Dial-a-Ride but you will have to undergo a paper-based mobility assessment to establish your eligibility for the service. To apply, you can download the form at tfl.gov.uk/modes/dial-a-ride/membership and post it to:
Dial-A-Ride, Assisted Transport Services, PO Box 68799 or phone 0343 222 7777 to request an application form.

We can support you to complete all of these applications at Sutton Vision. For just Freedom Passes and Blue Badges, you can also get help through Sutton Council concessionary travel team at concessionarytravel@sutton.gov.uk or phoning 0208 770 4578.

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 email 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

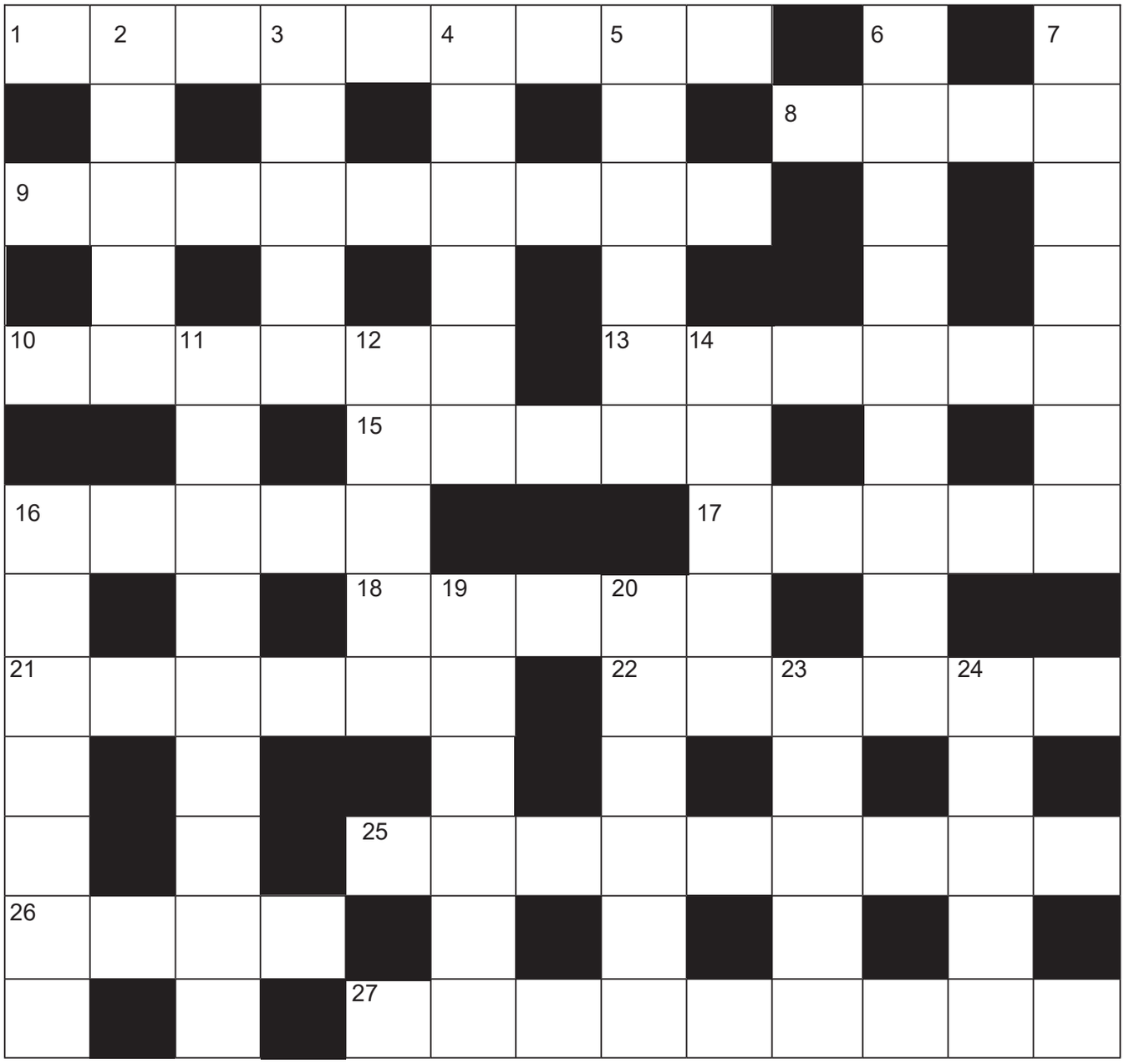
Macular Society Social Morning

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, alternate between Sutton Vision's offices in Robin Hood Lane and Lower Morden Lane Garden Centre.

Normally, membership fees and monthly contributions apply, but currently, no charges will be made. For more, contact Diana Coman on suttonmacular@gmail.com or call 07970 525 143.

Crossword



Crossword Clues (answers on page 25)

ACROSS

1. Place of refuge (9)
8. Seventh month (4)
9. Lively, energetic (9)
10. Anna……, Black Beauty author (6)
13. Twin speaker sound (6)
15. US state (5)
16. Vamoose (5)
17. Item of cutlery (5)
18. Light brown (7)
21. Education centre (6)
22. Junior doctor (6)
25. Retribution (9)
26. Barrel-like container (4)
27. Tried (9)

DOWN

2. Orchard fruit (5)
3. Pungent herb (5)
4. Support (6)
5. Appetising savoury food, such as pickle (6)
6. Eggplant (9)
7. Violent tropical storm (7)
11. Reliable labourer (9)
12. Dance under a bar? (5)
14. Voucher (5)
16. Doubt (7)
19. Firstborn (6)
20. Silly laugh (6)
23. Gentleman of the road (5)
24. Pleated frilling (5)

A Short Local Walk with a Cane and a Phone

I've previously written in CONTACT magazine about initially walking near my home using a cane. This is how I got on with a similar walk but now in 2023...

My plan was to do a local walk that I have done many times to a bench near the club house of the golf course behind where I live, taking my backpack with water, medications, phone etc.

It's not a long walk and the roads are mostly quiet so I can often walk pretty freely, playing the album Rise by Gabrielle along the way! Having arrived at the bench, I settled in to enjoy a break and the change of scene. I enjoyed hearing golfers, WhatsApping a friend a photo of my location and even tuning into a bit of local news radio but for me, it was mainly the quiet and independence, which I love.

I set off back at around 2pm and decided on the same album to play on my return. After walking a short while, the cars seem to be going a bit faster too. Over the last few years I have come to know this phenomenon and with a phone on me this time, I opted to find the nearest wall and check my position. I'm no master with the Maps App but I went for directions to my home and apparently I needed to walk 40 yards to the right and then turn left to go down my road.

I'd actually walked much further than I thought and having thought the gardeners I heard on my way to the course were still there, I found they had finished and I had walked that whole road, turned right and walked back down to the end of my road completely without knowing?

I made my usual way home from where I was, although for some learning, I kept my Maps App running and it gave me some nice reassuring reads as I walked down and up to my road until finally it told me that I had arrived home. And having been saved by the phone in this instance, I fortunately still had enough battery to listen to the final minute of my album before I entered the house and tried to explain my lateness and clean my shoes!

Pierre Shlimon

Crossword Answers

ACROSS

1. Sanctuary
8. July
9. Sprightly
10. Sewell
13. Stereo
15. Idaho
16. Scram
17. Knife
18. Beige
21. School
22. Intern
25. Vengeance
26. Cask
27. Attempted

DOWN

2. Apple
3. Chive
4. Uphold
5. Relish
6. Aubergine
7. Cyclone
11. Workhorse
12. Limbo
14. Token
16. Suspect
19. Eldest
20. Giggle
23. Tramp
24. Ruche

Regular Social and Peer Support Groups

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!

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.

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.

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.

Livewell and Future Vision Zoom sessions

Sutton Vision are pleased to be part of the award-winning Rainbow Collaboration Group, presenting two sessions a month on Zoom. The meetings can be joined online at us02web.zoom.us/j/4580437872, using Meeting ID: 458 043 7872.
We'll also be running the Zoom sessions on the large screen in our offices as a group, with tea and coffee offered.

2nd Thursday of the month at 10am - 11am on Zoom - "Live Well" sessions, - Visually impaired speakers sharing their sight loss journeys and hobbies, new skills and careers such as comedy, cooking and photography. We have also covered gene therapies and research into eye conditions, including Charles Bonnet.

4th Thursday of the month at 10am - 11am on Zoom - "Future Vision" workshop - Showcasing the most up to date assistive technology and apps to help visually impaired people to become more independent. This has included navigation, Artificial Intelligence (AI) recognition and text readers, the latest wearable technology and much more.

The recorded videos of the sessions are available at youtube.com/sightairedale.

For more information, please call or email Vicky.

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. Tech Talk is specific subjects, whereas Tech Social is for a chat and whatever you need help with.

Working Age Social Group

Chat, drink and eat at our monthly social for people of working age. This is held at Robin Hood Pub in Sutton, opposite our offices. A group will leave from our offices just before 4pm or you can meet us there; just drop in when it suits you.

VI 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.

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.

VI Crossword

Challenge yourself to do a crossword as a group with a sighted volunteer, chat and cup of tea and coffee thrown in too!

April's social groups and activities

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
3 **Coffee morning 10am-12pm**	**4** **Low Vision Clinic (by appointment only)**	**5** **Tech drop in 10am-12pm** **VI Bingo 1.30pm - 3.30 pm**	**6** **Tech Talk 1-3pm Getting around and journey planning**
10 **Easter Monday - closed**	**11** **Macular Group 11am-1pm**	**12** **Tech drop in 10am-12pm** **Crossword** **10.30am-12.30pm**	**13** **Livewell Zoom Session** **10am-11am** - Charles Bonnet Syndrome talk with Nina Chesworth **Charles Bonnet Group 11am-1pm**
17 **Lunchtime Quiz** **12pm - 2pm**	**18** **Low Vision Clinic (by appointment only)**	**19** **Tech drop in 10am-12pm**	**20** **Tech Social 1pm-3pm** **Social Eyes 2pm-4pm**
24 **Glaucoma support group 10.30am-12.30pm** **VI Scrabble 1pm-3pm**	**25**	**26** **Tech drop in 10am-12pm** **Cinema – A Man Called Otto – 10am**	**27** **Future Vision Zoom session 10am-11am** **Knit and Natter 1.30pm-3.30pm** **Working Age Social 4-7pm**

May's social groups and activities

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
1 **Bank Holiday Monday - closed**	**2** **Low Vision Clinic (by appointment only)**	**3** **Tech drop in 10am-12pm** **VI Bingo 1.30pm-3.30pm**	**4** **Tech Talk 1-3pm -** Audio books on Alexa and mobile	**5** **Afternoon tea**
8 **Bank Holiday Monday - closed**	**9** **Coffee morning 10am-12pm**	**10** **Tech drop in 10am-12pm** **Crossword 10.30am-12.30pm**	**11** **Livewell Zoom Session 10am-11am**	**12**
15 **Lunchtime Quiz 12pm-2pm**	**16** **Low Vision Clinic (by appointment only)**	**17** **Tech drop in 10am-12pm**	**18** **Tech Social 1pm-3pm** **Social Eyes 2pm-4pm**	**19**
22 **VI Scrabble 1-3pm**	**23**	**24** **Tech drop in 10am-12pm**	**25** **Future Vision Zoom 10am-11am -** ARX Vision Wearable **Charles Bonnet Group 11am-1pm** **Knit and Natter 1.30pm-3.30pm** **Working Age Social 4-7pm**	**26**
29 **Bank Holiday Monday - closed**	**30** **Living with Sight Loss Workshop 10am-2pm**	**31** **Tech drop in 10am-12pm**		

June's social groups and activities

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
			1
5 **Coffee morning 10am-12pm**	**6** **Low Vision Clinic (by appointment only)**	**7** **Tech drop in 10am-12pm** **VI Bingo 1.30pm - 3.30 pm**	**8** **Tech Talk 1-3pm -** Communications using your voice and dictation
12 **VI Scrabble 1-3pm**	**13**	**14** **Tech drop in 10am-12pm** **Crossword 10.30am-12.30pm**	**15** **Livewell Zoom Session 10am-11am**
19 **Lunchtime Quiz 12pm - 2pm**	**20** **Low Vision Clinic (by appointment only)**	**21** **Professional Vision Demo Day 10am-1pm**	**22** **Future Vision Zoom session 10am-11am** **Tech Social 1pm-3pm** **Social Eyes 2pm-4pm**
26 **VI Scrabble 1pm-3pm**	**27**	**28**	**29** **Charles Bonnet Group 11am-1pm** **Knit and Natter 1.30pm-3.30pm** **Working Age Social 4-7pm**

Useful emergency numbers

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

Together for Sutton		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