

SEPTEMBER 2021

UPDATE FROM KAREN KNIGHT, ACTING CHIEF EXECUTIVE

It is sad to start this edition of Magpie News with the news that our chief executive Gina Dormer, is leaving us to become the first ever female Master of Norwich's Great Hospital in its 732 year history. Gina has transformed Vision Norfolk since joining us in 2017, and we are very sorry to see her go. We wish her every success in her prestigious new role.



Karen Knight, Acting Chief Executive

We are currently in the process of recruiting a new chief executive, but in the meantime the Board has asked me to take on the role of acting chief executive. As a former managing director of NorseCare, I have been assisting the Vision Norfolk board on a project basis over recent months, and I am honoured to be 'minding the shop' until we recruit a new chief executive.

The good news is that we are starting to return to some semblance of normality after a tough 18 months for all of us.

At Vision Norfolk, we have felt the impact of the pandemic in numerous ways and, as we emerge from such an extensive period of lockdown, we remain mindful that the virus still remains a threat - and we will not be complacent about that. However, we are starting to introduce face-to-face meetings, activities and outings, and look forward to welcoming you into our hubs and onto our activities again.

Initially the hubs in King's Lynn, Norwich and Great Yarmouth will largely be operating on an 'appointment only' basis to make the environment as safe as possible for our visitors and our staff. Our Hub Coordinators are busy putting together programmes of work that will include a combination of drop-ins (for equipment, advice, a friendly face or support), coffee mornings and other group activities both on-site at the hub and off site (including walks and activities).



We always welcome involvement of volunteers as this helps us broaden what we can offer. So please do contact our Volunteer Coordinators (contact details at the end) should you be able to spare some time to support the charity. Our Telefriends (telephone befriending) service is in high demand, and we have been fortunate to have some wonderful new volunteers join us to help deliver this much-needed support.

Our work with children, young people and their families have continued throughout this period and we have an exciting and varied selection of activities, some virtual but many of them face-to-face over the coming months.

We want to know what our clients and their loved ones want and need post-pandemic, so that we can tailor our services to meet demand. This has been challenging given the difficult financial climate that we – like all charities - are operating in; however, we want to ensure that our services are responsive and able to support people to enjoy independent and fulfilled lives.

We have conducted a countywide survey as part of our efforts to ensure what we offer is relevant and useful to visually-impaired people in the county. The results of the survey showed that transport is a big barrier to people accessing support, and we are looking at ways we can address this.

Wishing you all a very healthy and happy autumn and we all very much look forward to welcoming you into our services.



THOMAS TAWELL HOUSE

We also have volunteers coming in every now and again with their pets, India is taking the pets around the residents which has been a huge success and lot of joy to our clients.

If possible, we would like to promote TTH a little bit and perhaps getting people to donate to our residents fund - this would help with more trips, more coffee dates with India etc.



UPDATE FROM THE NORWICH HUB

Activities are gradually returning to the Norwich Hub (Activity Centre), of course your safety is our highest priority so not all activities will be available straight away.

Seated Yoga under the expert tutorage of Angelique Weatherby resumed in August. We will be running a fortnightly session, on a Tuesday.

In August we welcomed back **The Norwich Macular Group** on Friday 13th (that's lucky).

We will also be resuming the **Short Mat Bowls Group** on Tuesdays under the leadership of Mike Plummer. These sessions will then continue fortnightly.

Boccia returns in September with coach, Roy Mcgee leading the sessions. The first session was on Friday 3rd September from 10am – 12noon. These sessions will then continue on every first and third Friday of each month.

Unfortunately, due to the ever-rising costs of providing our activities we have had to raise the fees accordingly. To attend the Hub (Activity Centre) for general activities the price has risen from £3.00 to £4.00. For Seated Yoga, the price has had to increase to £7.00 per person, per session.

For every ones safety, we ask that all attendees are sensible and do not attend an activity if they are showing any Covid related symptoms.



Lottery

We have teamed up with One Lottery to give you the opportunity to win weekly prizes whilst supporting our work. Tickets cost just £1 per week, with a top prize of £25,000 and additional alternating prizes such as a £250 worth of Uber Eat vouchers. The draw takes place every Saturday night and it is so easy to play – just go to One Lottery and type in Vision Norfolk – ideally, we are hoping you will set up a small regular payment for your tickets, alternatively, type in the URL below:

<https://www.onelottery.co.uk/support/vision-norfolk>

[Use Uber Eats jpeg from the website]

Broads Walk Challenge

Our first major fundraising event since Covid, the Broad's Walk Challenge, raised an amazing £6,500. A group of staff and volunteers walked, jogged or ran either 25 or 50k around the broads.

We have several fundraising events taking place for the remainder of year, if you, a friend or family would be interested in fundraising for us, please email, call or visit our website.



The Vision Norfolk Broads Walk Challenge Team

Opticians Project

Our volunteers are in the process of visiting all opticians in Norfolk to highlight our services to them so that they can refer those who are in need of our support. If your local opticians are in need of leaflets and information, please let us know.

Legacies

The charity has relied on legacies as a mainstay of our funding. Sadly, these have declined over recent years making it more difficult for us to plan ahead for the future. We therefore ask that you please consider us when making your Will. For more information, please see the enclosed leaflet. Thank you.

Countywide survey

Our first County Wide survey closed in May this year, with 95 responses received from both people who were unaware of Vision Norfolk and those that knew of us and have used our services. The survey has been really successful in providing a large range of evidence to assist our future development and potential funding applications.

Findings included the following:

Most awareness of Vision Norfolk was through 'word of mouth', the Sensory Support Unit, or our Eye Clinic Liaison Officers in the Hospitals, however, it is clear we need to improve promotion to West Norfolk and Breckland, working age groups and ethnic minority communities.

We were very pleased that there were high ratings of usefulness across all our services, (65 to 70% found them useful or very useful), with 13% confirming our community hubs were essential. Additionally, it was very positive that the majority of people found our activities fun and friendly (58-72%) and gave many suggestions of new possible activities. Whilst most respondents were aware of the sports and social activities, only 44% had knowledge of the Telefriends service.

Access was a main issue faced by respondents, particularly the lack of public transport and costs being barriers. Also, as activities were held mostly during the day, they were not accessible to those of working age.

Phone and online access to services during the pandemic was very well received, with a high preference for this to continue into the future, although there is a significant demand for face to face in the community hubs or local community venues, as the pandemic recedes.

There was a high level of interest in making much more information available via social media and links, such as equipment and technology, community activities and community support. With regard to technology there was a real positive response to learning more and having more information and advice.

Since the closure of the survey, our Vision Norfolk user group has been formed, led by Ed Bates, our Special Projects Coordinator. The User Group are planning to look at the results of the survey in greater depth and provide recommendations as we go forward. **If anyone is interested in becoming part of this user group please do get in touch with Ed. Edward.Bates@visionnorfolk.org.uk**

Thank you to all of those that completed the survey, we really appreciate the time you gave to us.



Activities

Our leisure and social activities here at Vision Norfolk are slowly re-opening now and a big thank you to everyone who has supported us with joining in and running virtual activities. The following activities will be taking place.

Please do call Mark or Helen on 01603 973216 or email mark.smith@visionnorfolk.org.uk for further details, and we are always pleased to hear from you with suggestions or ideas on places to visit or various activities you would like to undertake.

Countywide Audio book clubs

Our ever popular monthly audio book clubs continue to meet either online or over the phone using zoom, and new members are always welcome. Thank you to Norfolk County Council Library and Information service for their continued funding support for the audio book clubs.

Our monthly meetings are informal, friendly and everyone has an opportunity to give their thoughts and opinions on the audio book of the month. Books are supplied on an USB memory stick or MP3 CD and currently are being posted out whilst we are unable to meet up face to face in the local Libraries. The following groups will be holding zoom meetings, and please ask for the joining details.

Norwich book club, second Monday in the month from 1.30 - 3pm, 11th October 8th November and 13th December.

Fakenham book club, 3rd Monday in the month, 10.30 – 12.00, 18th October, 15th November and 20th December.

Cromer book club, 3rd Tuesday in the month, 2.00 – 3.30, 19th October, 16th November.

Dereham book club, 3rd Wednesday in the month, 10.30 – 12.00, 20th October, 17th November and 15th December.

Gaywood book club, 1st Wednesday in the month, 2.00 – 3.30 – 6th October, 3rd November and 1st December.

Diss book club, 2.00 – 3.30- 22nd October 26th November and 17th December.

We are keen to explore new areas in the county for further audio book clubs and please do get in touch if you would like us to consider a new group in a new area. We hope to be back in Libraries face to face very shortly.



EffstopEyes Photography Group

It's been great to continue with our monthly meetings over the last few months on zoom. The group has now started to meet up face to face, and our summer programme continued with a meet up in Norwich to photograph the various T-rex sculptures. We held our first face to face indoor meeting this year in August at our **Norwich Hub**, it was an opportunity for members to share their photographs from the visits to the Plantation gardens and the T-rex sculptures. Then followed a visit to Norwich Cathedral to photograph Dippy, who's taken up residence in the Cathedral Nave. We will be meeting up indoors for a photo review session on on 1st and 15th October, 5th and 19th November, 3rd and 17th December.

Creative Writing Circle

Our Creative writing group has been busy over the last few months with regular monthly zoom meetings and the group is very friendly and open to all styles of writing. Face to face meetings are now being offered here in our Norwich Hub, with group's next meetings are 21st September, 19th October, 16th November and 21st December.

Thursford 2021 Christmas Spectacular

Please note that all tickets for this event have now been sold.

Audio Described performances At the Theatre Royal Norwich

Come and Join us at the Theatre Royal Norwich for a performance of "Six" the Musical, on Saturday 25th September at 4.00pm with audio description. From Tudor queens to pop princesses, the six wives of Henry VIII finally take to the mic, remixing five hundred years of historical heartbreak into a celebration of 21st century girl power. Tickets are £37.00 this includes a sighted companion ticket if required.



Activities continued...

All the Fun of the Panto

This panto season will see our Vision Norfolk Theatre group offering tickets to see Dick Whittington for an audio described performance on Saturday 8th January 2022 at 2.30pm. Tickets are priced at £24.00, and this includes a sighted companion ticket if required, with payment by Friday 26th November.

Arts and Crafts Activities

We are currently arranging our Autumn Arts and craft programme and working with volunteers and existing members to re-start this activity. Please do give Mark or Helen a call to let us know what types of arts and craft activities you would like to undertake and what days of the week would best suit you.

Sailing Dates 2021

Our sailing activity leaves Magpie road with David Hale at 12.30 – and returns by approximately 5pm, cost is £5 for the minibus and £15 for sailing.

All dates are on a Thursday, 30th September, 14th October, 28th October.



Cuppa care

Bringing us together



91%

of UK adults think small moments of connection can make a difference to someone who feels lonely*

The Cuppa Care Bus aims to bring people together and tackle loneliness.

Whether you just want to get out of the house, to meet new people, or chat about something that's worrying you – we have friendly people on hand who can help.

Come on your own or with a friend, you'll be more than welcome to join us for a **cuppa** and a chat!

Contact us at cuppacarenorfolk@gmail.com or 01603 404440.



@cuppacarenorfolk

Wednesday 20th October	Queens Square, Attleborough NR17 2AF	10am - 12 noon
Wednesday 20th October	Cowper Road Car Park, Dereham NR19 2DA	1.30pm - 3.30pm
Monday 25th October	The Venue, Kerridge Way, Holt NR25 6DW	10am - 12 noon
Monday 25th October	Methodist Church Car Park, West Street, Cromer, NR27 9DT	1pm - 3pm
Wednesday 27th October	Strumpshaw Community Hall, Mill Road, NR13 4FS	10am - 12 noon
Thursday 28th October	Abbey Neighbourhood Centre, Exeter Way, Thetford, IP24 1EE	10am - 12 noon
Thursday 28th October	East Harling Sport & Social Club Car Park, Church Road, Harling NR16 2NA (TBC)	1pm - 3pm



The Thomas Tawell House Summer Party Volunteers

We would like to express our thanks and appreciation to all our Volunteers over the last 18 months.

For some Volunteers this has meant continuing with their Volunteering roles with our Telefriends and online groups but for many their role has been on hold as we have dealt with the challenges we have all faced during Covid.

We are pleased to know that many of our Volunteers are eager to return to their work with us and we can't wait to see you all.

A few Volunteers for various reasons sadly have left the Organisation and we wish them all the very best and greatly value the time they gave to Vision Norfolk.

Moving forward we have some super new roles and projects for people to get involved in and these can be viewed on our Website www.visionnorfolk.org.uk

Or you can find out more by emailing volunteers@visionnorfolk.org.uk or by calling one of our Hubs.

Young Drivers

Twelve visually-impaired youngsters had the chance to take to the wheel and drive at real-world road speeds as part of Vision Norfolk's programme of activities for young people and their families.

We teamed up with national organisation Young Driver to enable the twelve, aged between 10 and 18, to take a one hour one-to-one driving lesson at the Norfolk Showground, learning clutch control, reversing, parallel parking and more.

The event was made possible thanks to the generosity of local people who

responded to an online crowd-funding appeal, as well as the support of Young Drivers and their sponsor Vauxhall.

Each of the young people spent an hour with a government-approved driving instructor learning the basics of car control around a specially laid-out course at the 150 acre showground.

“Many of these young people will never be able to have driving lessons on the road, so the ability to take to the wheel in this safe way will really boost their confidence and help them feel they are not being left out,” said Barbara Dunn, children, young people and families co-ordinator.

Ernie Griffiths, one of the instructors teaching the visually-impaired young people in the manual, dual-controlled Vauxhall Corsas, added, “Whatever disability you have, you have to make the most of what you’ve got. You just have to give them the opportunity to do it.”

One of the young people taking part was ten year-old Seth Arber from Norwich, who has ocular albinism, which means he has limited peripheral and distance vision. Despite this, he was able to drive at speeds of up to 40mph, as well as doing manoeuvres such as a three-point turn and parking.

“I was really excited and a bit nervous, but it was easier than I expected,” he said. “The most difficult bit was straightening out after a turn, but it wasn’t too scary. I would love to drive again.”

Seth’s mum Amy paid tribute to the support that Vision Norfolk offers families with visually-impaired children. “We have been supported by Vision Norfolk ever since we first found out about Seth’s condition – it was a lifeline for the whole family. It’s not just about Seth – his two siblings, who are fully-sighted, have both taken part in activities, it’s really nice to be part of the wider Vision Norfolk family.”



**For further information on how we can support
you and how you can get involved:**

w | visionnorfolk.org.uk
t | 01603 573000
e | office@visionnorfolk.org.uk

Our hubs can be found at:

**106 Magpie Road
Norwich | NR3 1JH
01603 972605**

**12 Hall Quay
Great Yarmouth | NR30 1HP
01493 745973**

**Unit 3 Dundee Court
Hamburg Way | King's Lynn | PE30 2ND
01553 660808**

Registered charity no. 207060

**To keep up to date with Vision Norfolk please:
Follow us on social media | [@VisionNorfolk](https://www.instagram.com/VisionNorfolk)**

