



**215th
Annual Report
2020-2021**



For Vision Norfolk – along with everybody else - the 12 months up to 31st March 2021 (the period covered by this annual report) were amongst the most difficult times we have known.



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Covid presented us with an unprecedented challenge: keeping staff, residents in our care home and sheltered accommodation, and everybody with whom we interact safe was of course the first priority. Alongside that we found ourselves having to re-invent the services and support we provide to visually-impaired people throughout the county, for whom the pandemic posed particular challenges. And, of course, the crisis meant that virtually all fundraising activity had to be halted, just as we faced the additional costs involved in coping with Covid.

So it is with a huge sense of gratitude and admiration that we recognise the amazing job done by Vision Norfolk’s staff, who really did go far beyond the call of duty as they coped with the crisis. We also would give a massive vote of thanks to the many organisations and individuals who stepped up to support visually-impaired people throughout the county during this difficult time, and in particular those who volunteered help and support for the residents of Thomas Tawell House and Hammond Court.

As we write these words in autumn 2021, we are thankfully emerging from the worst of the pandemic, and life is slowly returning to what we have come to call the ‘new normal’. But the pandemic has left us, in common with the whole charita-

ble sector, with a lasting financial hangover, after 18 months when fundraising was next to impossible.

Towards the end of 2020/21, the Trustees embarked on a review of the charity’s assets and operations to ensure that it would remain sustainable for the long-term, and that we will be able to continue to provide support to all visually-impaired people in the county.

Sadly, that review resulted in some difficult decisions, including the move to reduce staff levels through redundancies. We are far from alone in the sector from having to do this, but it is not a decision we took lightly. The Trustees have a moral and indeed a statutory duty to ensure the long-term viability of the charity, and its ability to continue to support visually-impaired people into the future.

The pandemic meant that many of our wonderful band of volunteers were not able to support us as they normally do. It’s difficult to overstate just how important our volunteers are to the charity, and as operations start to ramp up again post-Covid, we are very happy to see many of them return to the fold. We really do value and appreciate what they do for us.

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“in the coming months we have some good news announcements to make...”

After the year-end, but before we produced this annual report, we learned that our chief executive, Gina Dormer, has been appointed as the first female Master of the Royal Hospital in Norwich in its 700 year history. Since arriving in 2017, Gina’s commitment to Vision Norfolk has been inspiring, and we will miss her. We wish her every success in her new role. We expect her successor to be in post early in 2022, and we are grateful to Karen Knight for interrupting her retirement to step up as interim CEO.

Despite a difficult year, the charity is still here, and making plans for the future. During our 216 history, we have survived many crises and difficult times. Thanks to its board, staff, volunteers, partners and supporters, Vision Norfolk is a very resilient charity, and we are proud to be its co-chairs.

One final thought: an annual report necessarily looks backwards at the previous year. However, in the coming months we have some good news announcements to make which mean that we can look to the future with a great deal of optimism. Thank you for your support through the difficult past year; and we look forward to sharing our exciting plans with you in due course.

Richard Hanson and Rev Canon Simon Stokes, co-chairs and trustees.

2,302

Support phone calls made by Vision Norfolk staff to visually-impaired people in Norfolk during the first two months of lockdown alone

3,140

further support phone calls made by Vision Norfolk staff during the year

2,500

more than 2,500 calls made by volunteers via our Telefriends service

184
2m

'garden visits' made during summer 2020 between lockdowns

148

family support places provided during the year

110

visually-impaired people across the county took part in a detailed survey to help focus Vision Norfolk's services

99

online activity sessions delivered during the year

- audio book clubs
- virtual photography
- heritage group
- virtual coffee mornings
- discussion groups

40

referrals made to 40 different organisations to provide support during lockdown:

- tackling loneliness
- providing equipment
- organising food deliveries
- arranging transport to medical appointments
- completing blue badge applications
- assisting with benefits issues
- providing information

36

parents benefitted from virtual support and social sessions

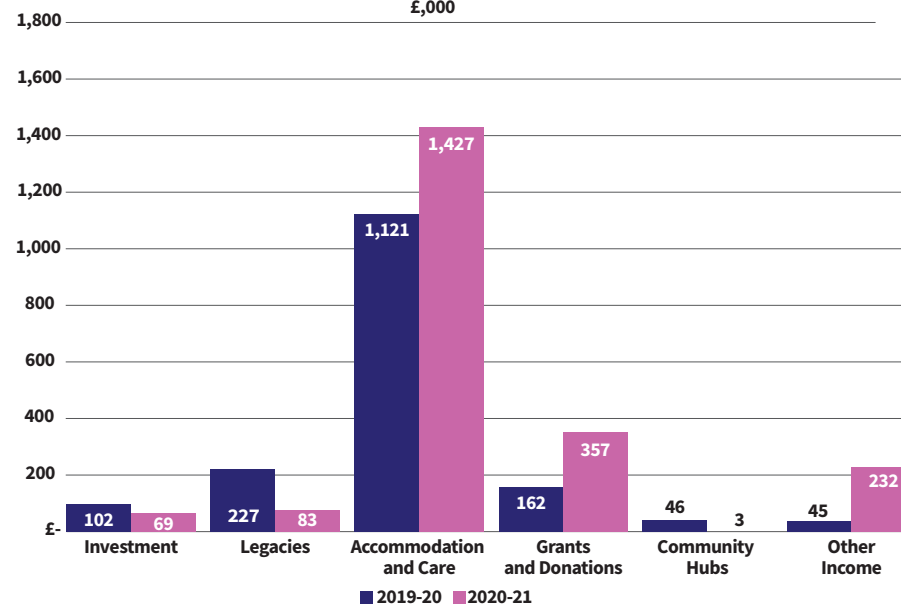
10

children individually supported virtually while in their school setting

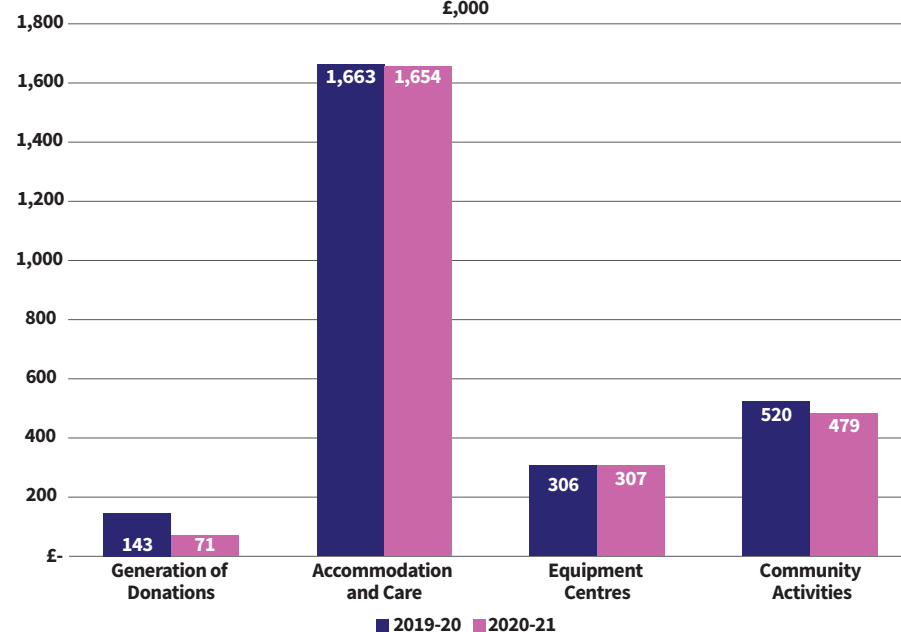
2

new Eye Clinic Liaison Officers appointed covering King's Lynn and Norwich, adding to the existing ECLO covering Great Yarmouth

Vision Norfolk Income
£,000



Vision Norfolk Expenditure
£,000





Thomas Tawell House resident Maurice Sadd chats with his sisters Jean Punnell and Pat Dale in a specially built socially-distanced visiting area in June 2020. Jean and Pat were the first visitors to the home after three months of isolation.



Retired teacher Sue York from Mundesley tap-danced for 26 minutes every day for a week as part of the '2.6 Challenge' which was put in place following the cancellation of the 2020 London Marathon – raising £721 for Vision Norfolk in the process.



A group of visually-impaired youngsters enjoyed an adventure day at Hautbois as part of the Children, Young People and Families activity programme.



Thomas Tawell House resident Annie Nicholls marked her 103rd birthday during the first lockdown, but that didn't stop staff helping her celebrate in traditional style.



Visually-impaired yoga teacher Angelique Weatherby produced a series of special yoga videos during lockdown, to help those living with sight loss stay fit and supple.



Hammond Court resident Vera takes delivery of a food parcel during lockdown. A variety of organisations generously stepped in to help staff ensure residents stayed safe and well-fed.



The rebranding of the charity was completed during the year, including new decals for our minibuses and new signage on all our buildings, including the Great Yarmouth and King's Lynn hubs.



Vision Norfolk partnered with hearing loss charity Hear For Norfolk during the year, sharing resources such as Hear For Norfolk's fully equipped mobile clinic. Pictured is West Norfolk Eye Clinic Liaison Officer Michele Burgess providing support to eye clinic patients at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in King's Lynn.



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NORWICH HUB

Magpie Road | Norwich | NR3 1JH
01603 573000

WEST NORFOLK HUB

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

GREAT YARMOUTH HUB

12 Hall Quay | Great Yarmouth | NR30 1HP
01493 74597

Full financial accounts, details of Patrons, Presidents, Vice-Presidents, Trustees, Executive Staff and other officers, along with other statutory information, can be obtained by downloading the charity's 2020/21 Financial Statements from www.visionnorfolk.org.uk/about-us/reports

Printed copies can be requested by calling 01603 573000.

Vision Norfolk is the brand name of Norfolk and Norwich Association for the Blind

Registered charity No. 207060

(front cover): Vision Norfolk staff member Mark Smith pictured during a street collection in Norwich shortly before Christmas.