

The latest news and events from Vision Norfolk

Magpie

SUMMER EDITION 2026

NEWS



Parenting with Sight Loss – Judy’s Story

The fears, doubts and beauty of raising sighted children.
Read more, inside.

TECHNOLOGY UPDATE: The latest innovations helping people live more independently.



Bishop’s Garden:
Join us for a Summer Garden Party!

Image: A group of six people walking along the Gorleston promenade on a sunny day.

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A warm welcome Happy Summer!

Welcome to the Summer Edition of the Magpie News!

In this newsletter you will find updates from the Spring season including Easter Holiday and May Half Term family adventures with the CYPF team, exciting news from the Norwich allotment and a special choir performance at the Fakenham Beer and Gin Festival.

As we look forward to the summer months, we are aiming to reach more people across the county with new accessible events and activities that you can get involved with.

If you have any questions about this newsletter, or would like it in another format, please get in touch with your local community hub. Our contact details are on the back cover.



Due to the bank holiday all our community hubs will be closed
Monday 31st August.

If you have any questions or concerns, please get in touch. All our contact details can be found at the back of the newsletter.

News from across Vision Norfolk

Highlights from our
community – read the
full stories online.



Image: Image: Trustee Rachael (left) and garden designer Rajul.

Sensory garden at the Sandringham Flower Show

We are thrilled to be teaming up with Norfolk garden designer Rajul Shah to create a special sensory garden at this year's RHS Sandringham Flower Show in July! The 'Vision in Bloom' garden cube is number 443 at the show, which will take place 22nd - 26th July. The garden is one of a number of Community Cubes – special spaces offered by the RHS for local community groups.



Image: 'Vision in Bloom' garden design.

Vision in Bloom

The central theme of the garden is vision and sight. Shapes were inspired by microscopic images of the structure and anatomy of the eye. The garden will incorporate all the senses, to ensure it can be enjoyed by everyone. There will be plants with interesting textures, strong scents, culinary herbs, and plants with movement that create sound, such as whispering and rattling grasses.

Thank you to our wonderful volunteers

The first week of June is national Volunteers' Week. Volunteers are involved throughout Vision Norfolk: as telefriends, drivers, activities volunteers, and more. We truly couldn't do it without them! In honour of Volunteers' Week we held a special celebration at Fairhaven Woodland and Water Garden and attended the Volunteer Extravaganza at The Forum Norwich to reach out to more potential volunteers.



Image: 'The Volunteers' Week logo.



Want to stay up to date? Visit visionnorfolk.org.uk/news to read these stories in full and more!



Children | Young People | Families

VISION NORFOLK

Children, Young People and Families

See how our CYPF service is making a real difference.



Image: A girl standing proudly next to a camel.

With the brighter weather on the horizon and the CYPF outreach service remaining popular, we can look forward to summer filled with events. Young people can look forward to climbing sessions designed to build confidence and resilience, a summer party bringing everyone together to celebrate and socialise, zoo trips offering fun and educational experiences, and much more. We are excited to continue providing opportunities that encourage independence, friendship, wellbeing, and enjoyment for all involved.

The May half term was another wonderful success and opportunity for families to socialise and spend some time together, offering a variety of

engaging and enriching experiences for families. The young people enjoyed an exciting archery session, a session as part of our ongoing allotment project and a fantastic visit to the Camel Park with a fun-filled day of exploration, animal encounters, and social interaction.

We are also incredibly proud that the service has been nominated for a Flourish Award, recognising the positive impact, dedication, and inclusive opportunities provided by the team. This nomination reflects the continued hard work of staff, volunteers, families, and partnerships with other organisations who help make the service such a valued part of the community and provide a holistic support for the entire family.



Any ideas? If you have a suggestion for a new activity or other ways we can support you, please contact us at CYPF@visionnorfolk.org.uk



Parenting with Vision Impairment - Judy's Story

When my son was 2 days old, a young doctor congratulated me on having a fine boy who would be able to help me and look after me!

My husband and I both had some useful sight, but it was deteriorating. I was concerned about how I was going to look after him.

I was afraid people would think I couldn't cope, and this did lead to my becoming very safety conscious and house proud. Crawling and toddling presented the safety challenges all parents face, plus my not always being able to see where he was or what he was doing. I kept the house quiet so that I could hear him moving around and dressed him in bright colours so that it was easier to see him. When I didn't want him under my feet in the kitchen, I put him in a play pen or in the highchair where he could see me and we could interact.

Making up bottles was tricky. Measuring the powder was simple, levelling off each scoop with the edge of a knife. I could just about make out the markings on the side of the bottle to measure the water.

A talking measuring jug would have been useful but unfortunately they didn't exist at the time. Spoon feeding was slow and messy. I would find baby's chin with one finger and then offer the spoon. He soon learned to home in on it. I was relieved when he took the spoon and fed himself.

My son assumed all adults were like his dad and me. My neighbour was amused when he put things in her lap to show them to her or took her hand and led her to things he wanted her to see!

My biggest challenge came when the children grew older. I didn't want to rely on them too much. When we went to the cinema, museums or other attractions, I did need their cooperation. They were good at reading signs, entrance, exit, toilets and places to buy food. I tried hard not to ask them to describe things to me.

I wanted to let them grow up without feeling burdened by my vision impairment. I hope I succeeded, but I haven't found the courage to ask.

Judy Manning



Many parents with disabilities face uncertainty, discrimination and additional challenges. Please reach out with your concerns and we can be a listening ear, put you in touch with others in similar situations and help you explore what equipment and support is available.

You are not alone!



Equipment and Technology

The latest innovations helping people live more independently.



Image: A woman and a man sitting inside the Vision Norfolk Equipment Centre in Norwich. Between them is a tablet that is open to show the Magnifier app.

If you have any questions about equipment that can support independent living, we can provide information and advice at our community hubs in Norwich, King's Lynn and Great Yarmouth or over the phone.

Our Community Outreach Workers are also available for home visits where they can discuss how your living space can best work for you.

Opportunities to Learn Technology

Free Tech Support Sessions

Norwich Hub - Every Monday and Thursday, 10am-1pm

Great Yarmouth Hub - Last Tuesday of

the Month, 10am-12pm

King's Lynn Hub - By Appointment

Come and have a cup of tea (or coffee), a biscuit and a chat about technology and accessibility features. Whether you're just getting started or want to feel more confident using your device, we are here to help you get the most of your technology. Please get in touch if you have any questions.

If you would like support, but can't make it into our hubs please get in touch.

Equipment Demonstrations

Monday 29th June 10:30am-1pm,

Norwich Hub, Optelec and HumanWare

Monday 27th July 10:30am-1pm,

Norwich Hub, HumanWare



Want to know more?

Find out more about how technology supports independent living at visionnorfolk.org.uk/get-support/equipment-centres

*Wednesday 29th July 10am-12:30pm,
Merchants Place Cromer, Optelec
Monday 28th September 10:30am-1pm,
Norwich Hub, HumanWare*

Experts from low vision equipment companies Optelec and HumanWare will be joining us throughout the year to demonstrate their latest equipment and answer your questions. These are drop-in sessions so you don't need to book ahead of time, however if there is something particular you would like to see please let us know.

Equipment Highlight – WeWalk 2 Smart Cane

Traditional long canes support users to get around independently by creating a wider field of touch to detect obstacles. They are also a widely recognised symbol of vision impairment prompting members of the public to give you extra space when out and about. Technology company WeWalk has created a “smart” version of the cane, with integrated technology to allow for additional features.



Image: A folded up WeWalk 2 cane sitting on a white table next to a laptop computer.

Design

The WeWalk 2 looks and feels similar to a traditional cane but has the addition of variety of tactile buttons and a built-in speaker. It is slightly heavier than a traditional cane and folds into 5 parts with a strap on the handle to allow for easy transport.

Functions

- **Obstacle Detection** – A sensor at chest height omits beeps or vibrates to warn about high obstacles such as tree branches.
- **Turn by Turn Voice Navigation** - Select a destination through the smartphone app and the cane will guide you. Destinations can be saved or searched for in the moment.
- **A Bright Torch** – You can switch on a light to make yourself more visible to traffic and other pedestrians.
- **An integrated AI assistant** - A microphone on the back of the can allows you to speak to the assistant to ask questions such as “Where is the nearest McDonald’s?” or used to search the internet for information additional information. This requires the app and data.

Give it a Try!

Vision Norfolk has a WeWalk 2 cane in our equipment centre in Norwich. This is available for anyone to come and try out to see how it works and what it feels like. Give us a call.



Get Support

To find out more please call us on **01603 573000** or contact your local hub.



VISION
NORFOLK



SUMMER GARDEN PARTY BISHOP'S GARDEN

Help us celebrate our 220th year of
supporting people living with
sight loss in Norfolk



Live music
Raffle
Children's games
and much more!

SUNDAY
26TH JULY
1PM-4:30PM
LAST ENTRY 4PM
Bishop's Garden
Norwich
NR3 1SB



TICKETS
Adults - £5
Children U16 - Free
Wheelchair users - Free
Buy online or at the door

Contact Us

01603 573000

fundraising@visionnorfolk.org.uk

Registered Charity No 1206599

Dogs - Assistance dogs only please
Parking - No parking on site - nearest pay and
display by the Adam and Eve Pub

Fundraising Triumphs

Quiz Night

In May the regular quiz group at Gallow Sports Centre in Fakenham chose Vision Norfolk to be their charity of the month. It was a fabulous night of general knowledge (and some very specialised knowledge) complete with drinks, a raffle and great company. At the end of the evening Vision Norfolk walked away with **£315** towards our 220th Anniversary Appeal to support Vision Norfolk's future.

We are very grateful to everyone who joined in on the evening and made us feel welcome.

Run Norwich 2026

We have six runners who will be taking part in Run Norwich this year in aid of Vision Norfolk. Chris, Lynsey, Robert, Alison, Jordan and Andrew will be taking on the 10K run on Sunday 6th September. Fundraising has already begun with £142 collectively raised so far.

If you'd like to find out more about the runners and show your support, please follow the link below.

<https://www.visionnorfolk.org.uk/run-norwich-2026/>



Image: Chris running in Run Norwich 2025 wearing a Vision Norfolk top.

Co-Op Fundraising



We're pleased to announce that we've been chosen by the East of England Co-op's Norwich Colman Road Foodstore and Dereham Riverside Foodstore as their Local Giving charity for the summer.

Over the next three months, they'll be collecting donations for us and raising awareness of the work we do.

Pop into the stores to get involved and donate.



Feeling Inspired? Download our fundraising pack today:
[visionnorfolk.org.uk/get-involved/fundraise-for-us](https://www.visionnorfolk.org.uk/get-involved/fundraise-for-us)



News from our Norwich Hub

Local updates, events and stories from our Norwich community hub.

Gardening Update

The summer seeds have been sown!

Our Norwich gardening group meet regularly to share their love of horticulture and swap tips for gardening with vision impairment. Last year, the group started its own allotment. In April they were able to grow with the addition of a greenhouse to raise seedlings for the allotment. The project is about more than just gardening, it supports wellbeing, confidence and social connection in a fun, inclusive setting.

The group is open to everyone, from newbies and expert gardeners, so please get in touch if you want to find out more.

The allotment project, including the new greenhouse, has been supported by a grant from Norfolk Community Foundation's Greening Our Communities Fund.



Image: Members of the gardening group with the new greenhouse.

Accessible Tandem Cycling Rides in Norwich

We are pleased to announce that we are now offering more opportunities to join tandem cycle rides around Norwich!

What are the benefits of cycling?

Cycling is a low impact form of exercise which can help to improve your cardiovascular fitness and lower body strength. It's a great way of enjoying the outdoors, making it a good mood booster too!

How does it work?

Vision Norfolk has tandem bicycles which we maintain and store at our Norwich Hub. To make your ride as safe and enjoyable as possible, we will pair you with one of our volunteer cyclists who are trained as tandem pilots to support people with vision impairment.

We will set up a time that works for both you and your pilot. Rides can be organised during the day or in the evenings or weekends. It's free to take part, and we are happy to chat to you about any questions you may have.

What's on in Norwich and South Norfolk

Sailing on the Norfolk Broads

Our sailing group is looking for new members!

We have teamed up with the local sailing experts at the Nancy Oldfield Trust at Neatishead to provide opportunities for local people with vision impairment to meet up and enjoy the waterfront at Barton Broad. Whether you're already a sailing expert, or have never been out before, you are welcome to come and give it a go.

Trips take place fortnightly on a Thursday between April and October. A minibus departs the Vision Norfolk Norwich Hub at 12:30pm, returning around 5pm. There is a £25 suggested donation to Nancy Oldfield Trust per sessions (a bursary scheme is available if you have difficulties affording this).

New Cooking Group Starting Soon

A new group of our popular cooking class will be starting on Thursday 22nd October 2026!

Each month we run a free cookery lesson at our Norwich Hub teaching practical skills that can be used at home. These are taught for about 8 months at a time to allow everyone to grow their skills and try out different recipes. Spaces are limited so please let us know if you're interested in joining in.

For a full list of all activities in your area visit: visionnorfolk.org.uk/norwich-hub

Regular activities

Norwich Macular Group

2nd Friday of the Month, 12pm-1:30pm

The Macular Society run local support groups to provide information and support to those with Macular Disease. The Norwich group is run out of the Norwich Hub with updates from Vision Norfolk staff on new equipment and activities as well as regular speakers. The meetings are open to anyone affected by central vision loss.

Glaucoma Support Group

2nd Friday of the Month, 2pm - 3.30pm

Our Glaucoma Support Group provides a free peer support and discussion space for anyone affected by Glaucoma. Guest speakers covering a variety of topics will often visit both the Glaucoma and Macular Group.

Photography

1st and 3rd Friday of the month, 1:30pm-3:30pm

The Photography Group is a fortnightly social group for people with vision impairment. Both cameras and smartphones are welcome. Meetings include local outdoor photo shoots and sessions reviewing photos at the Norwich Hub.



News from our King's Lynn Hub

Local updates, events and stories from our King's Lynn community hub.

The Choir Performs at the Fakenham Gin & Beer Festival

The Vision Norfolk Choir has been out there having fun and sharing music!

This was the biggest gig to date, and the first time performing with microphones and a full sound system. We are very grateful to the organisers and attendees for being such a supportive audience. It was such a confidence booster for the members, and they, as always enjoyed singing together.

The choir is a social group for local people to get out, meet up and fight the isolation that can come with sight loss. It meets at the Gaywood Community Centre on the 1st and 3rd Wednesday of each month. If you would like to come along and give it a try, please get in touch.



Image: Eight members of the choir singing on a stage.

Guest Speaker from the Deaf Association

On Tuesday the 19th May the Downham Market Macular and More group was joined by Sarah from the West Norfolk Deaf Association (WNDA), who gave us a very helpful and informative talk on the services and support offered by the WNDA.

The session highlighted the importance of regular hearing tests and taking the time to look after our hearing. Following the talk Sarah stayed at the meeting to chat with group members and discuss individual questions and concerns.

A programme of speakers is planned throughout the year, as well as some more formal mix and mingle sessions. The group meetings on the 3rd Tuesday of each month, from 1:30pm until 3:30pm, at Downham Market Methodist Church, Paradise Rd, Downham Market PE38 9JE.

What's on in West Norfolk

Swaffham Carpet Bowls - Taster Sessions

**Monday 29th June and 27th July,
12:30pm-1:30pm**

Have you always wanted to give bowls a try? Are you looking for a new accessible social group near you? We will be running two trial sessions of Carpet Bowls at the Swaffham Community Centre. This will be a relaxed group with volunteers on hand to provide support as required. We are trying to gauge interest, so if you would like to join in, but can't make the sessions, please let us know.

Seaside Trip to Hunstanton Thursday 9th July

Enjoy a relaxed day at the beach with a special trip out to the great Norfolk seaside. Transportation is provided to and from the King's Lynn Hub. Please get in touch for the full details

Macular and More Guest - Talking Newspapers Tuesday 21st July, 1:30pm-3:30pm

A representative from the local talking newspaper will be joining our July Macular and More meeting. Talking newspapers provide free news to people living with vision impairment in accessible formats. Come along to the talk to learn about the talking newspaper network, what goes into making the newspapers and to ask any questions you have.

For a full list of all activities in your area visit:
visionnorfolk.org.uk/kingslynnhub

Regular activities

Mashland St James Coffee Morning

**2nd Wednesday of the month,
10:30am-12:30pm**

We have started a new drop-in coffee morning at the Marshland St James Hall. Everyone is welcome to join us for coffee, cake and a friendly chat.

Historic Walks with The King's Lynn Town Guides

**Monthly on a Tuesday,
2pm-4pm (approx.)**

Learn about the historical architecture of King's Lynn with a series of guided sensory walks led by one of the Town Guides. The walks will include the opportunity to touch and feel parts of the buildings to learn more about their origins and history.

Snettisham Sailing

**Monthly on a Friday (10th July,
14th August, 11th September)**

Join accessible sailing sessions with experts from Snettisham Beach Sailing Club. Participants will be in a two-man dinghy paired with a volunteer from the Snettisham Beach Sailing Club who will teach you how to sail around the lake. The sessions are free and designed for people living with vision impairment. There is a hoist which can be used to assist people in and out of the dinghy if needed.



News from our Great Yarmouth Hub

Local updates, events and stories from our Great Yarmouth community hub.

Sunshine and Seafront Walks

Seafront walks are back in Great Yarmouth!

The first walk of 2026 took place in April, where walkers enjoyed the sunshine during a stroll along Gorleston's promenade.

The two-hour walks each end in a café where walkers can get tea and cakes. Staff and volunteers are available to guide and provide support as required.

Enjoy the fresh air and meet new friends while getting a bit of exercise. Join our monthly seafront walks for people with vision impairment designed to boost physical and mental wellbeing.

Earth to Ear Workshop

Have you really listened to your plants? In April we held a very special "Earth to Ear" workshop in the Great Yarmouth Library.

It was a great workshop, and everyone found the experience of connecting probes to plants and hearing the sounds they made fascinating. We would like to thank everyone at the library and the organiser, Catherine Jones, who

worked with us to make this the success it was. organiser, Catherine Jones, who worked with us to make this the success it was.

Archery in Corton

Sight loss shouldn't prevent you from trying new and exciting things!

Following on from success trial sessions earlier in the year we will be holding regular monthly archery session in Corton designed to be accessible for all abilities (and skill levels). Instruction and guidance will be available.

The session will take place on at Warner Hotel Corton, 2 The St, Corton, Lowestoft NR32 5HR. Please get in touch to find out more.



Image: Five "listeners" standing with one of the plant test subjects.

What's on in Great Yarmouth and East Norfolk

Summer Show at Cromer Pier

Tuesday 1st September

We are planning a special trip out to the Pavilion Theatre on Cromer Pier in September to see their Summer Show. For 24 years, this award-winning seaside spectacle has been the only full season end of the pier show in the world, blending cheeky British humour, dazzling performances, and West End production values that rival the best theatres in London. Please get in touch as soon as possible to let us know you are interested in joining us.

For a full list of all activities in your area visit: visionnorfolk.org.uk/great-yarmouth-hub

Regular activities

Ormesby St Margaret Coffee Morning

First Thursday of the Month, 10am-12pm

Drop by Hirst's Farm Shop Café and enjoy a cup of coffee, a slice of cake and a chat about everything and anything at one of our socials for local people with sight loss.

Gorleston Tennis

2nd Friday of the Month, 1pm-3pm

Give tennis a try at special sessions led by a LTA-accredited coach. Vision Norfolk is partnering with Gorleston Tennis Club to hold tennis sessions specifically designed for local people with living with sight loss. We use special tennis balls, some have bells so they make a noise while others are larger, so they move more slowly.

Creative Writing

2nd Friday of the month, 1pm-3pm

Join our writing and storytelling group for local people living with sight loss in Great Yarmouth. We hope to cover a variety of different subjects, and all formats are accepted. No experience necessary.

Cribbage

Every Thursday, 10am-12pm

Join us at the Great Yarmouth Hub for weekly Cribbage games. No experience is required, we are happy to teach anyone who has never played before. Each session we will split up into groups of 3 or 4 for a relaxed game or two.

Bowling

2nd Tuesday of the month, 12pm-3pm

Join us at Wellington Bowl on Wellington Pier for a day out and a couple of games.

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



VISION NORFOLK

Supporting you through sight loss

Website: visionnorfolk.org.uk **Telephone:** 01603 573000

Email: office@visionnorfolk.org.uk

Our hubs can be found at:

Norwich

Bradbury Activity Centre, Beckham Place, Edward Street,
Norwich NR3 3DZ

Telephone: 01603 573000

Email: office@visionnorfolk.org.uk

King's Lynn

20 Thoresby College, Queen Street, King's Lynn PE30 1HX

Telephone: 01553 660808

Email: kingslynnhub@visionnorfolk.org.uk

Great Yarmouth

12 Hall Quay, Great Yarmouth NR30 1HP

Telephone: 01493 745973

Email: greatyarmouthhub@visionnorfolk.org.uk

Magpie
NEWS

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