

YorView

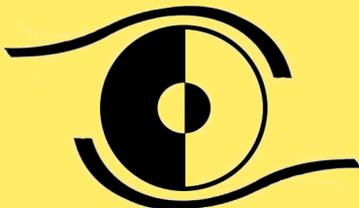
The newsletter of
York Blind & Partially Sighted Society



We are changing!

Attendees at our October AGM heard that from January 2019 YBPSS will be changing its name to **MySight York**.

Find out more about our plans for the Society on page 5.



Winter 2018

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YorView
is the Newsletter of
York Blind & Partially
Sighted Society

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From the Editor...

Welcome to the Winter edition of YorView. We are entering an exciting time for YBPSS with lots of changes in the months ahead. Not least of these is the change of our name which will take effect in the New Year. You can read all about what this means for us on page 5.

With December approaching we focus on products for Winter (p. 6-7) and outline some of the special events happening at YBPSS and around York over the festive season. Our own Christmas party is on Tuesday 18th December at the Marriott Hotel. We hope you will consider joining us for what is always a fun and friendly occasion.

Of course Christmas can be a lonely time for some and our Home Visiting volunteers provide a lifeline for people who are feeling isolated, or whose sight prevents them from keeping up with a favourite activity. On page 10 Catherine Bamford outlines how the service works and the immense benefits it can bring.

Wherever you spend the holidays, we wish you every happiness and look forward to seeing you in 2019!

Deborah

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From the Chief Executive



I have now been with you for 5 months and the time has flown by. I have enjoyed every minute and I have learnt such a lot. I would like to thank everyone for all their help and support, especially the team here at Rougier Street and the Trustees, in particular Jim who has been there whenever I had questions or needed some advice. I have passed my probationary period so I am here to stay! I have also moved to the local area so I am fully committed for the foreseeable future.

I would like to say thank you to Yvonne Gilling our Eye Clinic Liaison Officer in Scarborough and Bridlington. She has secured an exciting new role with a charity called Changing Lives. I wish Yvonne every success in her new

role and thank her for all her hard work.

I would also like to welcome Mike Hickman who joins us as the new Income Generation Manager. You can read more about Mike later on in this Newsletter.

We have taken a number of positive steps to move the organisation forward in the last few months. We spent two days together as a team at a staff Away Day at the end of September where we shared our ideas to develop and shape a new business plan and strategy. We have a wonderful team of staff and volunteers who have all the skills and knowledge to help me take the organisation forward so we can secure a sustainable future where we can support more people with sight loss.

With your help too I am confident the organisation can go from strength to strength, and with our new name of MySight York I feel sure we can reach out into the community and provide the best possible services to more people who need us now and in the future.

Major Change for YBPSS

I am very pleased to share with you the news that it was agreed at the AGM in October that our new name will be **MySight York**.

Our new name is not only much easier to say, it also reflects what we are all about. We are the go-to place in York for anyone with concerns about sight loss.

We really want to shout about all the great things we do and support more people with sight loss in and around York. We believe our new name reflects our core values of being welcoming and friendly and able to offer a wide range of services that enable people to make choices in a safe environment. Our new logo (below) emphasises our aim of supporting people to 'live well with sight loss', which we feel sums up what we do.

We would like to thank everyone for all your help and support. Your

ideas and comments have been invaluable in helping us find the right name - we couldn't have done it without you.

Over the next few months the team will be working really hard to produce new leaflets and posters, amend the website, contact the Charity Commission and do all the other things that are required when an organisation changes its name. We celebrate 40 years as an organisation next year and so this is the perfect way to get our celebrations off to a cracking start - a new name, a new year and a new look for the organisation.

We will keep you up to date with our progress. Watch out for lots of activity in January with press releases, radio interviews and lots of posters and coasters around York!

Karen



MySight York

live well with sight loss

From the Equipment & Information Centre

By Edward, Deb and Deborah

Winter can be a difficult time for getting out and about. If you are struggling with mobility, do come and talk to us as we can discuss the options and refer you to the appropriate people for assessment and advice.

For cane users, Queen Alexandra College has recently brought out a range of **Carbon Fibre Advantage mobility canes**. These are designed to achieve optimum balance for ease of use and comfort. They are stronger, more rigid and more durable than aluminium canes. They are also very light: for example, a 90cm Advantage cane weighs only 216 grams. The carbon fibre provides greater sensitivity as the fibres transmit superior 'feel'. For instance, if you happen to bump into something the cane will flex and return to straight unlike aluminium which remains bent. The joints of the folding canes are precision ground to prevent them sticking when folded.

The range includes long collapsible canes, telescopic canes, symbol

canes, support canes and children's canes as well as a range of push-on tips – roller, jumbo roller, teardrop and even a metal version. Prices start at £28 depending on the type of cane and the tip chosen. We have heard good reports of these canes by people who have tried them, so do let us know if you are interested in trying one.

Just because winter is approaching and it's getting colder doesn't mean that the sun is less bright.

Eyeshields can help to protect your eyes from bright sunlight and glare. They will protect you from harmful ultra violet light and some also block blue light. Certain filters and tints can also help to increase contrast and definition. You can wear them indoors and out and some are designed to be worn over your existing prescription glasses. We have a range of tints, styles and sizes in our E&I Centre so ask for our help to find the best for you!

Christmas is a time when many people will be wanting to telephone friends and family. If you find it tricky to use your existing telephone

do come and talk to us. We have a number of new arrivals as well as several popular long-standing options.

The stand-alone cordless landline, **Amplidect 260** (£54.95), has large white buttons with black, bold numbers and announces the numbers as you dial. When receiving calls, providing you have caller ID set up with your telephone provider, the number will be announced. The phone is GAP compatible so if you need multiple handsets around the house you can link them all together.

The **Big Button, easy to see landline telephone** (£14.95) has black buttons and white numbers, with three direct memory buttons and 10 indirect memories for you to store your most frequently called numbers. You can adjust the volume for the ringer and the speech and a super bright LED light will come on to alert you when receiving a call.

The new **Talking Big Button Mobile Phone** (£54.95) has a high contrast keypad with white text on a dark grey background. Each key announces the number when

pressed. The phone book stores up to 250 names and numbers, 10 of which can be stored as speed dial numbers. Previous versions of this phone had a poor screen with low-contrast, faded orange and black colours. This newer model has a much clearer high contrast black and white display.

People often ask us for suggestions for Christmas presents for relatives or friends. We conducted a very unscientific 'straw poll' and asked our visitors for their Christmas 'wish lists'. The following came out on top:

- Large print calendars and diaries (with the proviso that everyone has their own preferred style and size)
- A good kitchen or desk lamp
- A large print address book
- A USB player for talking books
- A talking watch
- Tactile Connect 4 or Scrabble
- Dorling Kindersley Braille books
- A nice pair of pyjamas

We can supply all of these (well, maybe not the pyjamas...) so do come and talk to us if you have someone special to buy for.

Activities Roundup

By Claire Murphy, Activities Assistant

Greetings from the Activities Department! The new schedule of Activities is out and we have a fun run-up to Christmas in the offing.

We are delighted to announce the launch of our new Activity Group '**Out & About**', a quarterly fun meetup. Our first outing is on Wednesday December 5th with a trip to the Christmas Market and lunch. (Please note, lunch is not provided, instead we have a table reserved at the Hop who are putting on a pizza and a drink for £10). Please contact Claire to reserve your spot on **01904 731127**.

We are also looking for Volunteers for this trip so if anyone would like to get involved, again, please call Claire. Without one volunteer per member the event cannot happen...

Boccia is moving back in-house. It has proved so popular that we are dividing the group and offering it fortnightly on Friday mornings and Monday afternoons. Please consult your new Activity Schedule for details (you can pick one up in Reception or email

Claire.murphy@ybpps.org for an electronic copy). There is currently a waiting list for Boccia - please contact Claire for more information.

We hosted a very successful course of Tai Chi with David and will be hosting further sessions in the New Year. Anyone who would like to try Tai Chi please contact Claire as we are starting a 6 week beginners course and an 8 week intermediate course in January. The photo shows David, Eleanor and Pearl getting into the Tai Chi spirit.



Tai Chi was a great suggestion from a member and we are open to new activity requests so, if you have any suggestions please let Claire know.

Please note:

18th December – Singing is Cancelled (Christmas Party)

There will be NO activities between 24th December and 2nd January 2019.

Kevin from Xercise Haxby is kindly hosting a Christmas Party for the **Exercise Group** again this year on Thursday 20th December. Please advise Claire of any dietary requirements.



Other sporting opportunities in York

If you fancy trying your hand at **Goalball**, pop along to Foss Sports Hall, York St John University on Saturday 24 November from 11am to 4pm. Contact internationalservice.org/event/goalball-tournament to book.

Also on Saturday 24 November at Energise Leisure Centre there is an open **swimming** session for visually impaired children and their families. An experienced disability swimming coach will be on hand to offer tips on technique. The session runs from 1-2pm followed by refreshments from 2-3pm. Contact chris.armstrong@GLL.org or call **01904 403909** to book.

British Blind Sport brings First Steps project to Yorkshire

British Blind Sport are helping children with sight loss aged 3-11 to get active by offering families a **FREE** activity pack. The aim is to help children build confidence, develop skills and most importantly have fun! Packs contain an audible ball, an activity book and stickers and a progress poster.

To order a pack, please email:

firststeps@britishblindsport.org.uk

call **01926 424247**

or visit:

www.britishblindsport.org.uk

Enjoy your Independence Again

Catherine Bamford shines the spotlight on our Home Visiting Service

Our longstanding home visiting service helps members enjoy independence again with the support and friendship of our dedicated volunteers. Volunteers do the little things that really matter; reading out a letter, writing out a birthday card, taking you out, or helping you take part in activities. Sometimes it can be as simple as someone turning up to have a cuppa and a chat.

Here you can see one of our members out walking with her volunteer.



Volunteers usually visit on a weekly or fortnightly basis for between one and three hours. The service is free and is available to anyone living in the City of York area who is struggling due to sight loss, whether practically or emotionally.

Part of my job involves meeting clients to see how they are benefiting from having a volunteer. It always makes me smile when I hear just how much they are enjoying their visits. I met one person recently who said:

‘My volunteer’s cheery attitude is infectious and she has brought out my confidence. I now go to a craft group with people of all ages who are not visually impaired. I also go to my hospital appointments on my own. Both of these I wouldn’t have done before her visits.’

Another of our clients has said that his volunteer cuts the loneliness out of his life. To me this sums up the whole service.

Of course it isn’t just clients who

benefit from the home visiting service. Friends, family members and volunteers themselves can also benefit. A lot of clients say that having a volunteer helping with practical tasks such as reading correspondence means that they have more time for the 'fun stuff' when their friends and family visit .

All volunteers are police checked and have undergone extensive training which involves sighted guided training so don't be put off if you want to go out, they will all have been trained to do this.

Our home visiting service has recently been reaccredited with Approved Provider Standard (APS) in recognition of the excellent work it does. The APS is the national quality standard designed specifically for mentoring and befriending projects. It is managed and delivered by NCVO and aims

to support safe and effective practice in mentoring and befriending. Organisations that achieve the standard have been assessed and found to exemplify good practice in the management and operation of the service including their commitment to safe working practices, identifying clients' needs and managing volunteers. Our reaccreditation is a reflection of all the hard work of the volunteers and staff who make the service what it is.

Anyone can make a referral to the home visiting service so please get in touch if you want to know more. It can sometimes take a few months to find a volunteer but I will always do my best to find you someone as soon as possible.

Catherine Bamford, Volunteer Manager, Tel. 01904 731122

A-boards Update

We are delighted that City of York Council has confirmed they will retain the ban on A-boards in the City Centre that has been in place since 2017. The Council does not plan to extend the area of the ban. However please let them know if you come across any boards that you feel are unsafe or causing an obstruction.

Fundraising news

By Carolyn Blain, Community Fundraiser

We have had a busy time in the fundraising department – keeping YBPSS events going and also supporting the Lord Mayor's Charity events. I have been to all the Lord Mayor's committee meetings and supported collections at events like the Racecourse and Food Festival.

Railway collection

Our wonderful team of volunteers raised £339.64. Thank you all.

Hospital Stall

We raised a magnificent £240 selling books, blankets and knitted items. Thank you to Barbara and everyone who manned the stall and donated, whilst I was on holiday!

The Big Quiz

28 teams did battle at this fun sell-out event, raising £800. We are planning a re-match in Spring 2019.

Upcoming collections:

Thurs 15th Nov – York Railway Station

Sat 1st Dec – Coppergate Carols

Mon 10th Dec – Carol singing at

York Railway Station with children from Dringhouses Primary School

Boxing Day Sponsored Walk

Organised by Dunnington Sports Club in aid of Alzheimer's and YBPSS. A 4 mile flattish walk around fields near Hagg Wood, Dunnington. Contact Carolyn for details.

Upcoming Lord Mayor's events

(tickets and information from www.lordmayoryork.co.uk)

Wine Tasting at The Mansion House—**Sat 24th November**

Collection at York City Football Club - **Sat 1st December**

Brass and Voices at St Olave's Church, Marygate with mulled wine and mince pies from Harrods! - **Weds 12th December**

Christmas Carols with the Civic party outside The Mansion House—**Mon 24th December**

Lord Mayor's Valentine's Ball at The Railway Museum—**Sat 16th Feb**

Golf Day at Pike Hills—**April 2019**

Don't know what to do with your change? Why not have a Yellow box at home to collect those loose coins and raise money at the same time! Pick one up from Carolyn in the Fundraising office. We raise over £200 a year in this way.

Do you know anywhere a Pink Elephant box could go? Or could you spare a couple of hours 3 times a year to collect a box from a local shop, club or pub? A few of our regular collectors have had to

give up and we need more volunteers. Please let me know if you can help.

To keep up with all our fundraising news, visit us at:

ybpss.org/get-involved/fundraising

Carolyn Blain,
Community Fundraiser
Tel. 01904 731125
E: fundraising@ybpss.org

Finding your Feet Course

Are you new to living with sight loss?

Are changes to your sight impacting on your daily life?

Our FREE two-day Finding your Feet course may be for you.

- **Share experiences and build your confidence**
- **Discuss solutions for daily activities and getting out & about**
- **Delve into the world of technology**
- **Tour our Equipment centre and try out some practical solutions**
- **Reflect on your Wellbeing**
- **Share information about local groups and activities**
- **Meet people who understand you**

Tuesday 22nd and Wednesday 30th January

For more information or to book a place contact Caroline Robertson on 01904 731124 or email: caroline.robertson@ybpss.org

Introducing Mike



My name is Mike Hickman and I am the new Income Generation Manager. I am delighted to take on this role, having worked previously in education and, more recently, for Disability Services at the University of Leeds. My previous experiences include pitching for University business and student numbers as a Head of Department for Initial Teacher Education. I have also

been heavily involved in local theatre, both in York and 'down south'; this, too, has involved securing funds, and aiming to make a return on the investments (never easy with theatre productions!).

Originally from the south of England, where I taught as a primary teacher, I moved to York in 2006 – having chosen York from the literal 'everywhere else' available due to my love for the city and its people. I look forward to making a difference on behalf of YBPSS and all its staff and members. Enabling people to be independent and confident is more than just a noble aim – it is something that YBPSS clearly delivers and I very much look forward to helping it continue to do so for a long time to come.

Christmas lunch

Marriott Hotel, Tuesday 18th December

Please join us for our Christmas celebration. Arrival is at 12-12.30 for a welcome drink and 2 course lunch (£18 per person):

- Turkey, grilled hake or roast beetroot, feta & spinach tart
- Christmas pudding or salted caramel cheesecake

After lunch there will be a raffle, carol singing and a Christmas quiz. This is always a lovely, fun event to get everyone in the Christmas spirit. Please give Edward your menu choices by 10th December.

Christmas Fun around York

Christmas events start in York on 15th November with the switching on of the lights in St Helen's Square. This also marks the start of St Nicholas Fair and the Yuletide Village at Shambles Market, where you will find a range of crafts, farm produce, jewellery and other gifts. There will also be lots of sweet treats on offer, or, if you need a break, Thor's Tipi promises cosy furs around a roaring fire with mulled wine or hot chocolate.

The Designer Outlet will once again host its Winter Wonderland

from November 17th to January 6th, with the Ice Factor outdoor ice rink, funfair rides and games and Santa welcoming visitors in his log cabin.

If you prefer a more traditional Christmas, York Minster has Carol Concerts on 13th/14th December. Or join in with the madcap fun at the pantomime – Cinderella at the Grand Opera House or The Grand Old Dame of York at Theatre Royal.

Whatever you do, we wish you a wonderful Christmas and a very peaceful New Year!

Audio Described Theatre Performances

Theatre Royal
(tel 01904 623568)

My Mother Said I Never Should
Sat 24th Nov 2.30

The Grand Old Dame of York
Thurs 24th Jan 7.30 and
Sat 26th Jan 2.30

Grand Opera House
(tel Freephone 0800 912 6971)

Cinderella
Sat 5th Jan 2.30

Abigail's Party
Sat 2nd Feb 2.30

The Comedy About a Bank Robbery
Sat 9th Feb 2.30

Christmas Closure

Our offices will close for Christmas at 3pm on Friday 21st December and reopen at 10am on Wednesday 2nd January.

Diary dates

All events take place at YBPSS unless highlighted

November		
Wed 21st	Games – monthly	10.30-12
Thurs 22nd	Exercise – weekly	10.30-12
Fri 23rd	Boccia - fortnightly	10-12.30
Mon 26th	Boccia - fortnightly	2-3.30
Mon 26th	Socialeyes	11.30-1
Tues 27th	Knitting – twice a month	10.30-12
Wed 28th	Discussion – monthly	10.30-12
December		
Sat 1st	Carol Singing Coppergate Centre	11-1
Tues 4th	Book Group – monthly	10.30-12
Wed 5th	Christmas market trip	12-3
Thurs 6th	Mobile Technology Group	12.30-2.30
Mon 10th	MD Support Group	10-12
Mon 10th	Carol Singing Railway Station	11-1
Mon 17th	Socialeyes	11-12.30
Tues 18th	Christmas lunch Marriott Hotel	12-3
Wed 19th	Esme’s Room	10.30-12
Christmas closure	YBPSS offices closed from 3pm 21st Dec until 10am Wed 2nd Jan	
January		
Thurs 3rd	Exercise – weekly	10.30-12
Thurs 3rd	Mobile Tech Group	12-1.30
Fri 4th	Boccia – fortnightly	10-12.30
Mon 7th	Boccia – fortnightly	2-3.30
Mon 7th	Tai Chi - weekly	12-2
Tues 8th	Knitting – twice a month	10.30-12
Tues 15th	Singing – monthly	10.30-12
Wed 16th	Games – monthly	10.30-12
Wed 23rd	Esme’s Room	10.30-12
Tues 22nd & Wed 30th	Finding Your Feet: Location to be confirmed	All day

We are grateful to the Feoffees of St Michael Spurriergate for their generous support in the production of this Newsletter.