We did it!

In January 2019 we changed our name from York Blind & Partially Sighted Society to MySight York. Read more about the rebrand, and our 40th Anniversary celebrations, inside.
From the Editor…

I was all set to write about the Rebrand and our 40th Anniversary. I was also feeling pretty grumpy: it was cold, I had 2000 envelopes to stuff, I’d forgotten to buy milk. Then I happened upon Janet’s story in the Newsletter folder. I don’t know who put it there, but I’m grateful…

‘After the shock of hearing there was nothing more the eye clinic could do for me, I called to see Vanessa and she gave me hope again. She made an appointment at the Low Vision Clinic where I got a magnifier and TV glasses so now I can see faces. The next visit was to the MySight York equipment centre where I got a foldaway light and bump-ons for switches. The library has a selection of Playaway tapes which are small and easy to carry about. I’ve also joined the Support with MySight Group. They have interesting speakers and we have a chat together.

So it really is true – as one door closes another one opens for us.’

Thank you Janet, not only for getting me out of a hole, but for reminding me what it’s all about.

Deborah
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Office Closure Dates
It has been an extremely busy start to the New Year for everyone here at MySight York. In January the rebrand started in earnest and I would like to thank everyone for their help in ensuring our new name was widely publicised. As part of the launch we were featured on Jonathan Cowap’s programme on Radio York. Jonathan visited us at Rougier Street and spent time finding out about what we do.

We have a new member of the sight support service based at York Hospital. Chris Wilson is the new ECLO and along with Vanessa he will cover all the eye clinics within the York Hospital Trust. You can read more about Chris on page 11.

I am delighted to tell you that we were successful in our bid to the Big Lottery Fund (now known as The National Lottery Community Fund).

We have been awarded over £270,000 to help make York’s communities more accessible to people with sight loss, so that they can access and engage with community activities, social, cultural and sporting groups. This will increase their leisure options and help reduce loneliness and isolation whilst maintaining independence. I will share more news about our project with you as it develops.

We celebrate 40 years of supporting people with sight loss this year and we’re planning a number of different events to celebrate. If you have any ideas of what we could do to mark this significant milestone please get in touch. I hope to see many of you at these events but don’t forget you can call in and see me anytime.

2019 is going to be a very exciting, challenging but rewarding year and I am constantly inspired by you our members and volunteers. I am confident we will go from strength to strength when work begins in earnest delivering our new strategy and our new marketing and income generation plan helps to find more funds to secure a sustainable financial future. Thank you again for all your help and support.
Call for Research Volunteers

Researchers at the University of York are looking for volunteers to participate in vision research. We are interested in how the brain processes visual information, particularly in people with different types of vision loss. We have 2 ongoing studies and are looking for people who fit the following criteria:

- Aged 18+
- In good general health
- Have either central vision loss (e.g. Macular Degeneration) or peripheral vision loss (e.g. Glaucoma)

What is involved?

A visit to the York Neuroimaging Centre for an MRI scan to get images of the brain. For one study, there will also be questionnaires to complete with the researcher.

For more details please contact:

Holly Brown
holly.brown@york.ac.uk
01904 567613 or

Leah Kelly
lgk504@york.ac.uk
01904 322909

Vehicles Parked on the Curb

Are you having difficulties using the pavement owing to parked or idling vehicles? If so, you can report the problem to City of York Council who will come and move the offending vehicle.

Get in touch with the Council by calling 0800 138 1119.

Poetry For All 2019

Thurs 14th March, 7 for 7.30
Unitarian Chapel,
St Saviourgate, York

Come and join a new tradition of accessible poetry-reading. There will be 7 slots for local poets, with big screen projection of poems submitted in advance. Featured poets: Donna Williams, Jackie Hagan and Imogen Godwin.

£5.82 (£5.50 at the door)
Contact 07914 271871
Deb Wheller delves into the wonderful world of Talking Books

RNIB are producing this year’s 12 World Book Day titles in audio and braille formats between February 28th and March 31st. They will be giving away a FREE WBD title to every child in the UK who cannot read standard print who requests one. You can choose your title and the format (DAISY CD or braille) you would like the book in. You then get a book of your own to keep. Giant print versions of the World Book Day £1 books for children are available from Guide Dogs. Contact Guide Dogs on 0118 9838275.

Improved access to audio books

Penguin Random House have launched a new partnership with RNIB and are making all their books available within the talking books library scheme. Dave Clarke, Director of Services at RNIB, said: ‘It’s the first time a publisher has simultaneously shared all their content with RNIB readers for both leisure and education and stated they are committed to making published content available in accessible formats on publication day, helping with learning and employment opportunities as well as ensuring people with sight loss are included in the buzz around new releases.’

The MySight Book group meets on the first Tuesday of every month and enjoys welcoming new members. Call Claire on 731127 if you would like to know more.

The National Aerospace Library is developing its aeronautical sound archive. Established in 1866 the Royal Society aims to further the art, science and engineering of aeronautics. The audio lectures archive features a diverse range of topics such as the RAF at 100, NASA flight research past and future and the future of human powered flight. You can also find recordings of interviews with test pilots from the 1940s to the 60s and aviation personalities. Access the podcasts using the following links:

https://soundcloud.com/aerosociety-podcasts/sets
http://www.aerosociety.com/podcast
RNIB Connect Radio offers a weekly compendium of book news, reviews and author interviews. You can also listen to RNIB Connect Radio on Freeview 730, smart devices and online at www.rnibconnectradio.org.uk

We have added Connect Radio to our Alexa device if you would like to explore it here at the centre.

For those passionate about books and accessible reading, Read On is a weekly compendium of book news, reviews and exclusive author interviews, broadcast and podcast every Friday at 1pm. All the episodes are also available at https://audioboom.com/channel/readonair

Do get in touch for more information about reading choices.

Focus days

Nigel and Judy will be here again with the Orcam My Eye 2 reading and face recognition device on Thurs 7th March, 10am-3pm. Please call to book an appointment.

Mark from Optelec will be demonstrating his popular range of portable and static electronic magnifiers and readers on Monday 11th March, 10am-2pm.

See flyers for more information.

Esme’s Room York Charles Bonnet Syndrome (CBS) support group

Next meetings:
Wednesday 27th Feb
Wednesday 27th March
Wednesday 24th April
10.30-12.00

You are very welcome to join the group where you will find the space to talk and share your experiences around visual hallucinations in a confidential, informal setting.
Greetings from the Activities Department.

We have successfully run a programme of Tai Chi - 6 weeks for beginners and 8 weeks for intermediates. We will be launching another round of Tai Chi in May, so if anyone is interested in signing up please contact me on **01904 731127**.

The new times for Boccia are alternate Fridays, 10–11.30am and alternate Mondays, 2–3pm. Please can you confirm your attendance with me so that we have the right numbers to get a great game going?

The Boccia Gang continue to frequent York and District Indoors Bowls Club on Wednesday. The session is from 1–3pm, and most participants get there at 12 as there is a very good & reasonably priced restaurant on site. Anyone wishing to join can call me and I will buddy you up with someone to go along.

I went to a brilliant Community Choir with Glynis and Eleanor. The Honeysuckle Choir runs at Moor Lane Youth Centre on Wains Road, Acomb on Wednesdays from 10 to 11.15am. If you are interested please contact me for more details.

There is the possibility of some yoga sessions in May. We have also been offered a course of meditation, mindfulness and hypnotherapy. Ideally to run these sessions we need 10 people to sign up so please contact me with any expressions of interest.

We also have some spaces in Knit and Natter. Please drop me a line if you are interested in getting involved. We have been knitting some excellent dog jumpers which are for sale on Ebay.

There will be NO KNITTING on Tuesday 23rd April 2019 as the office will be closed.
Would you like to take part in one of the special events we are planning this year? We are putting together a photographic record of the lives of people living with sight loss in York, and we’d love you to be included.

We want to capture images of you going about your everyday life, perhaps at school or college, working, travelling, shopping or enjoying your retirement. Maybe you would like to show us how you spend your leisure time, enjoying a hobby, playing a musical instrument or doing a sport. You could be at home baking, relaxing or listening to a good book.

What would you be pictured doing? We would also like to record a few words about each picture. The ideas will come from the people involved so if you fancy taking part we’d love to hear from you.

There are lots of other ways you can help with the exhibition. Roles include taking photographs, writing or recording captions, putting the exhibition together and helping to run the event. If you’d like to get involved or just want to know more please contact Deb Wheller on 636269 or email deborah.wheller@mysightyork.org

Of course when the exhibition opens we hope you will all come and explore this photographic celebration. Find out more in the next Newsletter.

Save the Date!

We are planning a summer party to celebrate 40 years of supporting people with sight loss in York. Join us on Wednesday 10th July for a celebratory afternoon tea with entertainment. Everyone welcome—we hope to see you there! Look out for full details in May’s Newsletter.
News of groups

**Support with MySight**

We have recently made some changes to our Macular group, which is now open to anyone with sight loss regardless of their condition. The Support with MySight Group is a place for those living with sight loss to share knowledge, tips and ideas to make the most of their sight. Come and meet others in an informal café style environment and chat over a cuppa. You are welcome to bring a friend.

You do **not** have to be registered sight impaired to join us. Anyone with sight loss is welcome.

The group meet on the first Wednesday of alternate months. Dates scheduled so far are:

- **6th March 2019** 10.30 to 12pm
- **1st May 2019** 10.30 to 12pm (Guest Speaker from the Falls Team)
- **3rd July 2019** 10.30 to 12pm

It would be useful if you could let us know if you are planning to attend. Please call Caroline on 01904 731124 or email caroline.robertson@mysightyork.org

**Socialeyes Activities for all**

We would like to invite everyone to our regular meetings and activities. We meet to exchange ideas about things to do together in York (eating, going to the Theatre, going to accessible events, etc) at 11.00 on the third Monday in the month. There is a regular Mobile Technology Support Group on the first Thursday at 12.00, and we often have a Craft Group on the second Friday 10.30-12.00.

On March 8th this will be an amazing Pottery Class by Ben Arnup, a successful local potter. He will bring quick-drying clay with boards and tools and teach us to make coil pots we can take home. Eyesight not required. The session costs £3.50 including refreshments.

Please let me or Claire Murphy know if you would like to come. Hope to see you soon!

Anna Baldwin
(baldwinyork@btinternet.com)

Claire can be contacted on 731124 or claire.murphy@mysightyork.org
New Member of Staff for Hospital Team

We are very pleased to welcome Chris Wilson (seen above with Vanessa Camp) to the Hospital Sight Support Service. We caught up with Chris to ask him about his new role.

Tell me about yourself
I am originally from Hull. My wife is registered blind and a guide dog owner so I have a close connection to sight loss. Two of our sons are also registered blind. I studied Rehabilitation Studies for Visual Impairment at university. I then went on to work as the first Eye Clinic Liaison Officer (ECLO) in Cornwall.

Describe your new role
I’m going to be working closely with Vanessa Camp. I will be dividing my time among York, Selby, Malton, Easingwold, Bridlington and Scarborough hospitals. I will be taking the ECLO service wherever it’s needed, so that everyone will be able to get the same service no matter where they live.

The ECLO is an intermediary between hospital and community services. We’re the first point of contact for certification and registration of sight loss. We can act as a sounding board, and provide explanation, advice, emotional support, signposting and referral to other services. An important part of my role is getting out and about and making links with local services.

Tell me something you want to achieve in this role
I want to be sitting in one of the satellite hospitals knowing that the patient hasn’t had to travel all the way to York to get what they need.

What’s your secret ambition?
To be in a rock band. Actually, I’d like to be Brian May.

Any private passions?
I love model railways (00 gauge)!
This month we introduce a new series of articles focusing on the ways in which people live with sight loss in York. We started by asking MySight York volunteer Barbara to share her day.

“I wake at 8.08 am, unless the dogs wake me first. I don’t really have a typical day any more – very different from before my sight loss, when I was working Monday to Friday. I try to keep Mondays free so that my husband and I can go out for a long walk with the dogs. The rest of the week it can be Book Group at MySight York, pilates classes at the gym, or ballroom dancing, which I’ve recently taken up (it’s just like Strictly).

Oh, and there’s always Italian homework to do. I started learning Italian 5 years ago because my husband wanted to find his family home in Italy and we decided one of us had to learn Italian first… In the past I would have left the homework to the last minute but now I have to do it the night before because otherwise it’s too tiring. Of all the things I do now, I probably enjoy Italian the most. It’s exhausting, a real challenge, and I have made some lovely friends.

As a volunteer for MySight York I help with Esme’s room (the support group for people with Charles Bonnet Syndrome), support fundraising activities and monitor the Home Visiting service. I also run a Macular Support group in Harrogate.

I would say in general that I’m a lot less stressed than when I was working. My day is under my control now and that’s something I enjoy. I was a Consultant Psychiatrist for adults with learning difficulties, and although I loved my job, trying to work with my sight problems was very, very hard.

I have myopic wet macular degeneration, which means that things look distorted to me. I think this is why I find things so much more tiring now – an ophthalmologist told me that my brain is having to work overtime to sort out the conflicting images it is receiving from each eye.

I would still like to become more independent in travelling around. I’d like to be able to walk into town by
myself or tackle an airport independently. Places like York station concourse are difficult because although my feet tell me that the floor is flat, it looks uneven to me and I find that very disorientating.

I tend to avoid reading and writing if possible, but I always use a thick black pen and a reading guide helps to block out any distracting wonky lines. I use my iPad a lot: I use Siri and I dictate emails and texts. I know if I had a sight-related problem I could come and talk to someone at MySight York.

In the evenings I tend to do absolutely nothing! I don’t go out much at night because I find there’s lots of glare and I don’t feel comfortable driving.

The last thing I think about before I go to sleep is whatever audio book I’m currently listening to. At the moment it’s something by Patricia Cornwell. I’d never have chosen something like that when I was working – I used to be a real chick lit fan! But when you’re in a book group you try whatever the group chooses. I’ve only ever given up on one book – that one was far too gruesome for me!”

Barbara is seen here getting to grips with Italian grammar, using her black pen, large print notebook and iPad.

Black pens and reading guides are available in our Equipment & Information Centre. We can also talk you through accessibility features for mobile technology. The YorSensory team from City of York Council are available to offer support with mobility (see their article on page 15).

If you would like to feature in ‘A Life in a Day’ we’d love to hear from you. Please call Deborah Cairns on 01904 636269, or email deborah.cairns@mysightyork.org
Finding Support at Home

We asked three York-based services that offer support at home to tell us about their work.

The Connecting Communities Service at the British Red Cross is a free service for adults (18 years plus) across York, who are feeling lonely or socially isolated. After meeting for an initial assessment, we can work with you in the following ways, for up to 12 weeks:

- helping build your confidence and self-esteem
- reconnecting you with your community
- revisiting past interests or identifying new ones with a view to building meaningful friendships

Volunteers and staff help in lots of ways, including signposting to other agencies for specific support needs, and travelling with you to groups or community activities until you feel confident on your own.

Whether you’re struggling with life’s demands or simply don’t know where to turn for a friendly chat, the Red Cross can help. Our dedicated Connecting Communities services are there to help you feel better connected to your wider community.

To get in touch with your local Connecting Communities service in York, please contact Briony Grassie:
07720 351949 / 01904 785272
Connectyork@redcross.org.uk
or visit www.redcross.org.uk/connect.

We asked three York-based services that offer support at home to tell us about their work.
Community Health Champions are people who, with training and support, voluntarily offer their skills and passion and make use of their community links to transform Health and Wellbeing in their neighbourhood. MySight York has a dedicated champion, Christine Cockett (pictured left) who can help members access health and social activities in their own communities. If you would like to meet Christine to discuss your requirements, please call Caroline Robertson on 731124.

For more information on Community Health Champions, including how to become one, please contact healthchampions@york.gov.uk or call Hannah Hall on 01904 552774.

Yorsensory is the Wilberforce Trust’s newest service in York, for adults living in York with sight loss, hearing loss or both. The Yorsensory team are professionals with a wide range of knowledge, skills and expertise in the field of sight, hearing and dual sensory loss. The services available through Yorsensory include Statutory assessments on behalf of City of York council for adults with a sensory loss, Registration of the Certificates of Visual Impairment, when eligible, issuing of equipment to support visual or hearing loss, information and advice about equipment and/or other services and service providers available to provide support.

We also have qualified Rehabilitation Officers who can conduct lighting and environment assessments and offer mobility training to enable anyone to use a Guide Cane or Long Cane.

Visitors to the Yorsensory Hub will benefit from meeting staff who can demonstrate a wide range of support aids for anyone with a hearing or visual loss. Our staff can advise on accessible software to make tablets, laptops and smart phones easier to operate for the visually or hearing impaired user. We run groups which provide connection with other people, to combat isolation with specific sensory loss, and to connect you with other services and service providers.

Contact Yorsensory on tel. 202292 or enquiry@yorsensory.org.uk
Welcome to the Fundraising News under our new name of MySight York! This is an exciting time as we change the name but fundraising carries on as before!

**Lord Mayor fundraising**

**Friday 12th April** – Golf Day at Pike Hills. Tickets/Information from www.lordmayoryork.co.uk

**Sky Dive**
Bethany Greaves, a wonderful Healthcare Assistant in York Hospital’s Eye Clinic is doing a Sky Dive for us in 2019. To sponsor her, please go to: https://mydonate.bt.com/fundraisers/bethgreaves1

**Coast to Coast Walk**
2 members and Karen are planning a Coast to Coast walk in September and they need sponsorship and help along the way. Please give some thought to how you can help this magnificent event to raise funds for MySight York and Guide Dogs Association.

**Dates for your diary**
Friday 19th / Saturday 20th April

(Easter weekend)
Deans Garden Centre collection. Collectors needed please! 9am to 4pm.

**Thank you’s**
Robert Way RIP £350.00
Jeffrey Lockwood RIP £218.00
John Carroll RIP £132.54

**Money Raised:**
Coffee mornings:
Hilary Child at Rufforth £425.00
Helen Arundel in Wigginton £321.00
Thank you!!
Coppergate Carol singing: £703.47
Railway Station carols: £218.34
Thank you everyone who came along in the rain and the cold. You are stars!

**Hospital Stall**
We raised a magnificent £298.20 at our recent hospital stall, selling books, blankets and knitted items. This is fantastic, thank you everyone who came and helped.

**Charity of the Year**
York Unitarian Church and Dolly
Mixtures Ladies Group of York have both chosen MySight York as their Charity of the Year. They will be supporting us throughout 2019, for which we are very grateful.

**Do you want to be more involved with Fundraising?**
I am looking for people to be part of a Fundraising Focus group to get together and organize some smaller events for MySight York. You will need to be able to attend meetings and lead an event without me. Get in touch for more details.

**Pink Elephants**
As everyone knows we have changed our name. This means that all the Pink Elephant boxes need their signage changing. I will have the new signage soon so if you are a Pink Elephant collector please contact me and I should be able to supply you with a new label.

We need more volunteers to help with collecting Pink Elephant boxes in Acomb and Poppleton. Please let me know if you can spare a couple of hours, 3 times a year to help.

**Scarecrow**
We are hoping to take the MySight York Pink Elephant Scarecrow to some Festivals around York this summer. Can you help by putting it in your garden in Heworth, Poppleton or Appleton Roebuck?

Carolyn
Community Fundraiser
Tel 01904 731125
fundraising@mysightyork.org

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**Dog Walking Event**

On Saturday 20th April we are jointly hosting a fundraising event with the Island and York Music Hub as part of the Lord Mayor’s Charities. It is a very exciting sponsored Dog Walk with stalls, refreshments and raffles. The Lord and Lady Mayoress will be in attendance. It’s a great excuse to get your walking boots on, grab a dog and come along to the Knavesmire between 12 and 3pm.

We also need volunteers and raffle prizes for this event. Tickets are £10 per group.
Give as you Shop

Mike Hickman, our Income Generation Manager writes:

Raise money for MySight York while shopping!

As part of my Income Generation role, I am actively looking for new ways to bring money into MySight York. There are two new ways to raise money while internet shopping, and one new way to donate. Please do consider using these yourself, and advertising them to family and friends!

If shopping via Amazon, you can make a donation of 0.5% to MySight York for each purchase you make via the following link:

https://smile.amazon.co.uk/ch/1159188-0

Similarly, you can donate to us for free whilst shopping with 4,300 shops by signing up for Give as you Live at this address:

https://www.giveasyoulive.com/join/mysightyork

General donations to MySight York can be made via PayPal’s “Giving Fund” at:

https://www.paypal.com/gb/fundraiser/charity/132278

You will notice that the MySight York name is being adopted by each of the above; references to York Blind & Partially Sighted Society will be phased out over the next month.

Finally, if you are a Waitrose customer, you can nominate the charity for their Community Matters initiative by filling in an application instore and handing it to the Welcome Desk. Pavers employees can also nominate a charity to be supported by their Foundation.

If you work for an organisation that invites nominations for Charity of the Year or other similar initiatives, please do consider putting us forward (and do let me know! I am happy to help with applications).

This is an exciting year for MySight York – donations and fundraising activity via grants, trusts and local (and not so local) companies will make a huge difference to the valuable work we can do in our community.
Audio Described Theatre

Theatre Royal
(tel 01904 623568)

Wise Children Thurs 14\textsuperscript{th} March 7.30 and Sat 16\textsuperscript{th} March 2.30

The Remains of the Day
Sat 23\textsuperscript{rd} March 2.30

Noughts and Crosses
Sat 6\textsuperscript{th} April 2.30

Handbagged
Thurs 9\textsuperscript{th} May 7.30 and Sat 11\textsuperscript{th} May 2.30

Much Ado About Nothing
Sat 18\textsuperscript{th} May 2.30

Grand Opera House
(tel Freephone 0800 912 6971)

Fame
Sat 9\textsuperscript{th} March 2.30

Rock of Ages
Sat 27\textsuperscript{th} April 2.30

Northern Ballet
(tel 0113 220 8000)

Victoria
Sat 16\textsuperscript{th} March 2.30 (Leeds)
Sat 23\textsuperscript{rd} March 3.00 (Sheffield)

These performances include an Insight workshop and touch tour.

Anyone for yachting?
Sue Hogge writes:

If you are interested in sailing a 38 foot yacht this spring or summer please contact me on 07767 717440. You don't need any experience - I first tried it when I was 50, absolutely loved it and have been going ever since. The people are great fun and very good at teaching you in easy stages. You live on the boat for up to a week as you sail around the coast of England. Cost from £25-40 per day.

Office Closure Dates

Please note our offices will be closed on the following dates:

Friday 19th April
Monday 22nd April
Tuesday 23rd April
Monday 6th May
Monday 27th May
## Diary dates

All events take place at MySight York unless highlighted in blue

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<th>February</th>
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<td>Wed 27th</td>
<td>Discussion—monthly</td>
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<td>Thurs 28th</td>
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<td>Thurs 7th</td>
<td>Orcam Focus Day</td>
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<td>Fri 8th</td>
<td>Socialeyes Pottery class</td>
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<td>Mon 11th</td>
<td>Optelec Focus Day</td>
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<td>Knitting—twice a month</td>
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<td>Poetry for All, St Saviourgate</td>
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<td>Tues 19th</td>
<td>Singing—monthly</td>
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<td>Collection at Dean’s Garden Centre</td>
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<td>Sat 20th</td>
<td>Sponsored Dog Walk, Knavesmire</td>
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<td>Wed 1st</td>
<td>Support with MySight group</td>
<td>10-12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mon 6th</td>
<td>MySight York closed for Bank Holiday</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fri 17th</td>
<td>St Crux sale</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mon 27th</td>
<td>MySight York closed for Bank Holiday</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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