March / April Newsletter 2022

Featured in this newsletter:

• [Take part in our Wellbeing Walks](#_Fundraising_News)

• [World Glaucoma Week – eye tests a must for all](#_Eye_Health_-)

• [West Sussex Fire & Rescue Service – book a ‘safe and well’ home visit](#_News_&_Information)

# CEO's Message

Dear Members,

Welcome to our second newsletter of the year. I hope you are all well. As always, we are open and here for you, so if you or someone you know is living with sight loss and needs some support, please do contact our friendly team via: 01243 828 555, enquiries@4sight.org.uk or visit our website: [www.4sight.org.uk](http://www.4sight.org.uk)

Our services are available across West Sussex and are free to access. Anyone can contact us, you do not need to be referred. We rely on the generosity of our local community and various trusts and foundations to raise the c.£400,000 it costs each year to deliver our specialist services. We couldn’t do it without you, so thank you for all your donations and continued support – it really does mean a lot.

In this issue, find out how to sign up for our fundraising Wellbeing Walks, find information about leisure activities and don’t miss important information about arranging a free fire safety home visit, plus hints and tips for everyday living in the kitchen and garden.

Kirstie Thomas - Chief Executive

Update your details

Don’t forget to let us know if you have moved or changed your phone number recently, so that we can continue contacting you to support you. Please call us on: 01243 828 555.

Newsletter format & feedback

We produce the newsletter in a variety of formats – large print, Braille, email and audio, on USB or CD. If you would like to receive our newsletter in a different format, or have any feedback about the format you receive e.g. paper type, please let us know on: 01243 828 555.

# Eye Health - Spotlight on Glaucoma

From 6 - 12th March we were proud to support World Glaucoma Week, an initiative of the World Glaucoma Association aiming to raise awareness on glaucoma, by reminding people of the importance of regular eye health checks.

Glaucoma is a degenerative disorder of the optic nerve that produces visual field damage. This may be because the eye pressure is higher than normal (shown in the diagram on the right), or because of a weakness to the optic nerve. In its early stages, it is asymptomatic and if untreated, it may progress. An eye health check is the only way to know you have the condition. With early treatment and monitoring, the damage may be minimised.

Treatment for glaucoma aims to lower your eye pressure, this usually starts with eye drops, and for most this is the only required treatment.

Glaucoma UK Digital Support

Groups Glaucoma UK runs free digital glaucoma support groups every fortnight. Topics range from the basics of glaucoma, to living well with the condition and the latest research. It is also possible to join by telephone – no internet connection required.

The next talk is ‘Glaucoma and Genetics’ on 23rd March 2022, 10.30am-11.30am. Speaker: Anthony Khawaja - Consultant Ophthalmic Surgeon and Associate Professor, UCL Institute of Ophthalmology.

For more information: visit www.glaucoma.uk/events or contact the helpline on 01233 648 170 or helpline@glaucoma.uk

# Leisure Activities

4Sight Vision Support Walking Groups

We have recently welcomed 18 new volunteer Sighted Guides to our popular walking groups. The volunteers have attended an online session on sight loss awareness and the principles of Sighted Guiding, followed by a practical guiding session with one of the group leaders.

Walks take place once a month either in the Mid Sussex or Chichester and Arun areas, and are varied with countryside and coastal walks as well as the popular walk around the city walls in Chichester or along Centurion Way. Walks are followed by a self-funded lunch in a local café or pub.

To attend our walking groups you must be able to walk approximately 4 miles. To find out more, please call 01243 828 555.

“I have been a Sighted Guide since August, it’s a great scheme and has many benefits for both the VIPs and the guides. We get out in the fresh air, which is good for our mental health and wellbeing, we meet new people and visit different parts of West Sussex. The walks are well organised and we always finish up with a lovely lunch and time to socialise. I would thoroughly recommend this great volunteering experience.” BK, Volunteer.

Virtual Clubs

Don’t forget our virtual clubs continue to run monthly, focusing on books, technology and history, as well as a quiz! Access is via the Zoom video and teleconferencing facility. For further details please call us on 01243 828 555.

Local theatre & Audio Description

The Hawth Theatre in Crawley has an Audio Description service, which is part of its commitment to making the theatre, arts and entertainment accessible to all.

The Hawth offers:

• Free car parking spaces.

• Adapted facilities and access.

• Brochures in accessible formats.

• Audio and British Sign Language described performances.

• An Access Scheme – entitling companions to a free ticket.

Visually Impaired Patrons use headsets to listen in to their team as they describe sets & costumes and the action on stage. Touch tours of the theatre sets and costumes are also available on request. The Audio Description service has operated since 1989 and is run by a small team of dedicated volunteers. The service is generally offered on productions that visit the theatre for several days.

All theatres in West Sussex run similar services. For further information please visit each theatre’s website directly or give their Box Office a call.

British Blind Sport (BBS) “Have a Go Days”

Their programme is now live, aiming to encourage more blind and partially sighted people and their families to get active and participate in inclusive sports! Days will be held around the country, with the closest one in London on 3rd April. Registration is required. More details are available on the BBS website: [www.britishblindsport.org.uk/bbs-have-a-go-days/](http://www.britishblindsport.org.uk/bbs-have-a-go-days/)

Did you know that Midhurst has a Bowling Club?

Midhurst Bowling Club have been in touch to let us know that they are keen to arrange some mid-week blind and sight impaired bowling mornings this summer. For further details and to register your interest contact Malcolm Hutchings on 01730 812 713. (This club is not run by 4Sight Vision Support).

# News & Information

Helpful Hints

Please find below a few tips and tricks to support you in your kitchen and garden, if you’re living with sight loss. For more of these useful life hacks please visit henshaws.org.uk and search ‘life hacks’.

In the garden:

• Place small brightly coloured items (e.g. a pen) upright in front of treasured plants, to avoid disturbing them when weeding.

• Try to choose shrubs and plants that don’t need a lot of pruning or maintenance.

In the kitchen:

• Coloured card or sticky paper in your kitchen cupboards helps to create contrast against the contents.

• Use elastic bands around tins to help you identify them (i.e. one band on soups, two bands on beans, etc.).

West Sussex Fire & Rescue Service – Safe and Well Visits

You can arrange a home visit to get safety advice and, if required, fit smoke alarms or other specialist fire detection equipment free of charge. Eligibility criteria apply. Contact West Sussex Fire & Rescue Service: 0345 8729 719 or safeandwell@westsussex.gov.uk

Are you entitled to Attendance Allowance?

You can get Attendance Allowance if you’ve reached State Pension age and have a physical disability (including sensory disabilities such as blindness) and your disability is severe enough for you to need help caring for yourself or someone to supervise you, for your own safety. Attendance Allowance is not means tested. If you think you may be eligible please call us on 01243 828 555 for more information.

Yellow Wristband for visually impaired patients in hospital

Yellow wristbands are currently used in NHS hospitals to signify that a patient is at risk of a fall. Pegi Shove, the widow of Paul, an age-related macular degeneration patient, believes their use could be extended to cover patients with sight loss.

The last days of Paul’s life were extremely distressing, largely because NHS staff were not aware he could not see properly. Food was not being eaten, water was being spilled, he was not able to use his mobile phone properly, urine bottles were not close to hand.

If you would like to support Pegi’s campaign for Yellow Wristbands for visually impaired patients in hospitals, please email the Macular Society who are supporting Pegi: stories@macularsociety.org

Living Well with Sight Loss courses

These courses are for adults of all ages, including friends and family members. The two-week phone course includes a range of information and advice from understanding benefits, staying independent, tips and gadgets for everyday living, eye health to hobbies and interests and other support organisations and services. You'll also learn from each other's experiences and share top tips.

Courses run every Tuesday and Thursday from 12th April to 21st April, from 10.30am to 12pm. To sign up to a Living Well with Sight Loss course, please phone RNIB on 0303 123 9999.

Did you know...

Torch Trust, the Christian Sight Loss charity, is offering a free, small MP3 player with audio Bible to anyone who is losing their sight. To order your free audio Bible player: call 01858 438 260 or visit [www.torchtrust.org/pathway](http://www.torchtrust.org/pathway)

Supporting Children, Young People and Families

In February we embarked on our first Children, Young People and Families outing of the year to Out of Bounds. In the morning one group went to soft play where they enjoyed slides of all shapes and sizes, balance equipment and the ball pit. The other group challenged the rock climbing walls, trying to reach the top without falling!

We then had a delicious lunch before playing two games of bowling. Overall, it was a fantastic day out and much laughter was had by all.

Join us on Sunday 3rd April for our family Easter party. Contact us on 01243 828 555 to find out more.

OrCam Read

We can now offer demonstrations of the OrCam Read Pro after obtaining two of the devices from our partners at Optelec. The OrCam Read is a handheld device that uses Artificial Intelligence to convert text into speech almost instantly.

Our CEO Kirstie, who has been issued an Orcam Read through the government funded Access to Work scheme, shares her thoughts on the device:

“Since stepping into my new role within the organisation, I am now having to read an increased amount which can prove tiring when accessing this visually. The OrCam Read has proved invaluable as just by pushing a button, I can have the printed word converted into audio for me to listen to. It now travels around with me wherever I am and is adding significant value to my working day.”

If you would like more information on OrCam Devices or Access to Work, contact us on: 01243 828 555

# Fundraising News

For further details about any of the following please contact the Fundraising Team on 01243 838 001 or fundraising@4sight.org.uk

Wellbeing Walks

Following the success of last year’s event, you can sign up to one, two or challenge yourself to all three over the next year!

• Angmering Park Estate, Saturday 9th July 2022

• Bognor Regis Seafront, Saturday 1st October 2022

• Horsham Town, Saturday 18th March 2023

Contact us today to find out more or to sign up over the phone.

Do you shop online?

If so, you can donate to 4Sight Vision Support at no extra cost, through amazing platforms such as AmazonSmile, EasyFundraising and Give as you Live. Visit their websites to sign up.

Could you help us with fundraising in your local area?

We’re looking for volunteers to help us with our fundraising activities, things like putting posters up on notice boards, asking shops/cafés/businesses if they would be willing to have one of our collection boxes and emptying the boxes when they’re full.

If you know the perfect locations in your area and have a few hours to spare every other month or so, please get in touch. Travel and parking expenses can be reimbursed. In particular we’re looking for help in the following areas; Arundel, Angmering, East Preston, Haywards Heath, Horsham, Midhurst, Petworth, Pulborough, Rustington and Selsey.

Do you use Nextdoor?

Nextdoor is an online community for neighbourhoods where you can get local tips, buy and sell items and much more. If you are part of it, please help us raise the profile of our services and fundraising activities. As an organisation we can’t become a member, but individuals can help to spread our news. Contact the Fundraising Team if you can help.

Make a Will Scheme

Thank you to everyone who participated in our first ever Will Workshops and Make a Will Scheme last year. With sincere thanks to the team at local solicitors, Kreston Reeves, who donated their time for free, the Scheme raised £2,000. We’re hoping to repeat the Scheme this year, please watch this space for more information.

Congratulations to our 200 Club winners:

Feb: Mr G, Haywards Heath, No. 142

Mar: Mrs Brown, Crawley, No.79

Centenary Prize Draw Winners

Thank you to everyone who supported the Draw, we’re delighted to let you know that this has raised a fantastic £3,300!

Congratulations to our winners;

Giggling Squid voucher - No. 08051, Mrs Jolly.

Rock of Ages tickets - No. 21987, Mr Davey.

Woods Travel voucher - No. 01909, Mrs Brewer.

Regis Centre voucher - No. 22993, Mrs Smith.

Hepworth Brewery Tour - No. 10322, Mrs Voller.

Reynolds Furniture lamp - No. 03150, Mrs C.

Firebird Brewery shop vouchers - No. 08399, Mrs James.

Temple Spa goody box - No. 22362, Mrs Halfacre.

Dawn’s Vintage Feel Good box - No. 09150, Mrs F.

Did you know…

A donation of £29 - Could enable Tara to carry out a Low Vision Assessment, supporting each member to find a magnifier which makes it easier to complete daily tasks.

£15 - Could enable Naomi to run one of our virtual clubs, bringing members together to talk all things musical, discuss the latest book or get tech advice.

£8 - Could enable us to send one of our informative newsletters, available in large print, audio or Braille, to 15 members.

For any further information, to make a donation or to find out how you can support us in other ways, please contact the Fundraising Team on 01243 838 001 or fundraising@4sight.org.uk