

# **Vision North Somerset Newsletter**

Registered Charity 1165364 December 2016

## **Rendezvous opens its doors!**

Rendezvous Drop in Café will be open to all of our members every Thursday afternoon from 2.00 pm to 4.00 pm in the Bradbury Room here at Neva Road.

## **There will be an opportunity to meet Guide Dogs at our New Year Launch on Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> January.**

So do come along, meet the dogs and learn about the services Guide Dogs can offer. Thereafter Rendezvous will be open every Thursday.

No need to book, no attendance fee, just join us if you feel like some company. You can use our Wi-Fi to get online, join in a game of cards, or just sit and have a chat.

From time to time we might have an interesting speaker, demonstrations, or a sing along. It's up to you to tell us what you want. Just drop in on a Thursday afternoon whenever it suits you. Friends and Carers welcome too.

## **Vision's AGM**

Thank you to the members who attended the Annual General Meeting on 22<sup>nd</sup> November. Our visitors were also able to look round the building and visit the Resource Centre.

In his address Chairman Ian Parker spoke of the changes during the year which have resulted in Vision North Somerset

becoming an incorporated organisation. This is an important development for our future and ensures that the organisation is fit for purpose in the modern world of contracting and compliance.

The Chief Executive's report included details of how Vision works with health and social care commissioners to develop services and ensure that people with sensory loss living in North Somerset receive the best support we can offer. It was noted just how important the voluntary side of the organisation was in providing an overall service – and this could not be achieved without the help of our dedicated volunteers.

## **Staff Update**

If you have visited the resource centre recently many of you will have met our new Information Officer Anna Flint. Anna's knowledge of visual impairment issues is growing day by day and she is very much enjoying her role.

Joan Sale, our former Finance Officer has asked me to pass on her thanks to the many people who sent good wishes for her retirement. Joan assures me that she is busier than ever and doesn't miss us at all!

New Finance Officer Julian Beale is getting to grips with our finances and ensuring that we stay on track.

The staff are committed to providing an excellent service and your feedback indicates that we do that and more.

## **Open Day**

An early date for your diary! Join us on Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> April for an informal Open Day. An opportunity to look round the

building, visit the resource centre and find out information. Optelec – providers of electronic magnifiers will be joining us, as will a range of other providers such as Guide Dogs and Blind Veterans. More information will be included in the March newsletter.

## **Cane – what cane?**

You don't necessarily need a white stick if you are blind or partially sighted, although many people do find them very useful.

There are three main types of white sticks or canes. The first type is called a symbol cane and you simply hold it rather than use it to find obstacles in front of you. As the name suggests, it's a way of letting other people know that you're blind or partially sighted. It's particularly useful in busy or crowded places as other people who see the cane should take a bit more care not to bump into you. You might also find that you get more offers of assistance from staff and members of the public because they can see that you have sight loss more easily.

The second type is called a guide cane and you use it to find obstacles in front of you. You hold it diagonally across your body and then use it to find obstacles such as kerbs or steps.

The third type is called a long cane and people who have been trained to use one roll or tap it from side to side, as they walk, to find their way and avoid obstacles.

Red and white banded canes of all types are available and these indicate that someone has a hearing impairment as well as sight loss.

There are different types and sizes of canes available. You can contact Vision's Rehab Officer to find out which is the right option for you. We will provide training so you know how to use the cane and stay safe.

## **Oasis for Men**

A new organisation has been set up to help to reduce the isolation of the male population in Weston super Mare. They offer mutual friendship, support and advice. The group meets every Thursday at 7,00pm at various venues and arranges trips, village walks, lunches and courses to incorporate all interests. Men from all walks of life sometimes feel alone and need a little support. If you'd like to know more contact Mike on **07984 695 065**.

## **Stay Well this winter**

Where to go to for help:

### **Community Meals**

Community Meals can provide a hot meal to people who struggle to cook for themselves: Call them on: **01275 882 867**.

### **Care Link**

Feel less vulnerable if you feel unwell or have a fall knowing that help is at hand. The Care Link system is activated by pressing the button on the unit, pendant or wrist watch which connects to the monitoring centre where the friendly team can get help to you quickly. Contact them via Care Connect on: **01934 888 801**.

## **The Warm House Discount**

People in receipt of certain low income benefits may qualify for a Warm Home discount on their electricity bill. Call the helpline on: **0345 603 9439**.

## **The Winter Fuel Payment**

People born on or before 5<sup>th</sup> May 1953 are entitled to the winter fuel payment. Make sure you get yours. Call the helpline: **03458 151 515**.

## **Care Connect**

If you are struggling to cope this winter the first port of call is Care Connect – the link for all council social care services, they're there to help: 01934 888 801

## **Flu Vaccinations**

If you are aged 65 or over or if you have an underlying medical condition you qualify for a free flu vaccination. Contact your own GP surgery to arrange your appointment.

## **Need help over the holiday period?**

If your GP surgery or pharmacy is closed call NHS 111 or visit [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk). Advisors can direct you to a local service which is open.

## **Diaries and Calendars**

Vision has in stock large print diaries and calendars from the RNIB. These are in large bold print and are a great help in ensuring you don't miss your appointments and special days.

Wall Calendar: £5.00

Desk Diary: £8.50

Pocket Diary: £6.00

Partially Sighted Society Diaries are also available at £5.50.  
Inserts are £4.00.

## **Did you know?**

Our pink elephants are out and about in shops and venues throughout North Somerset to help us to collect funds to support our services. Over the past year our Pink Elephant Boxes have helped us to raise **£2,115**. Thank you to our local communities for their support and to our volunteers who help to collect the elephants in and count the cash. Well done!

## **And now it's Christmas (again!)**

Please note that the office will be closed from Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> December and will open in the New Year on Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> January 2017.

The Trustees and staff join together to wish everyone a happy Christmas and hopefully a peaceful new year.



**Vision North Somerset**

**3 Neva Road, Weston super Mare, BS23 1YD**

**01934 419393**