

# **Vision North Somerset Newsletter**

Reg Charity 1165364

January 2018

## **Vision North Somerset faces challenging times**

At the Annual General Meeting in November, Chairman Ian Parker warned of the challenges faced by the charity as resources dwindle.

“With local authority cutbacks and greater financial pressure on sources of charity funding, Vision trustees are aware of the need to plan for the future and to use our resources carefully. I can tell you that without a significant increase in income we are facing an uncertain future” he said.

The Chairman went on to praise the work of the organisation noting the success of working in partnership with the local authority to provide a whole range of support for people with sensory loss from one source.

Cllr Parker informed the meeting that the charity needs to raise in the region of £80,000 annually to run the organisation. He thanked the Sky Diving Team for raising an amazing £4,000, and to everyone who supported them with sponsorship.

However, he pointed out that Vision needs a stronger voice in asking for the support of our members and our community; “We need to be bolder in asking people to leave us money in their wills, because legacy income will be a very important source of funding for us in the future. We need to charge for services

where necessary and people need to know that every pound they donate can be gift aided if they are taxpayers.”

The Chairman’s address ended with praise for staff and volunteers for their commitment and hard work, and for the support of fellow trustees.

### **Please consider a legacy**

A legacy leaflet is enclosed with this newsletter and we hope it will prompt people to write or revise their will and consider leaving a legacy to Vision so we can continue to help local people with sight loss.

Remember not to confuse us with the RNIB, or any other national charity – Vision North Somerset is a local charity supporting local people.

### **Could you raise funds for us?**

Don’t wait to donate, let us know of any ideas or contacts you have that would help us increase our income. Hold a coffee morning in our name, collect your small change in one of our elephants, send in a donation and ask family and friends if they would like to support us too.

You could consider becoming a “Friend of Vision North Somerset” and make a regular monthly donation by standing order. Give us a call and we would be happy to set that up for you.

Meanwhile we’ll be working hard with applications to Trust Funds, the Big Lottery and other funders. But times are tight and competition is fierce so we need all the help we can get.

## **Clubs and activities**

If you would like more information about any of these activities, please call the office on 01934 419393 and we will put you in touch with the relevant club leader.

### **Good Companions Club**

It's good to get out and make new friends. If you'd like to give it a try, a warm welcome awaits at the Good Companions Club, which meets every Tuesday from 2pm to 4pm at the For All Healthy Living Centre in Weston.

Club Leader Aileen Milsom says; "It's great to see everyone enjoying themselves and having a chat. We have entertainment and refreshments, but most of all it's an opportunity to get out of the house and meet other people."

### **Daylight Plus Club**

If you live in the north of the area, then it may be more convenient to try the Daylight Plus Club, which meets every Friday from 10.30am to 2.00pm. The club provides transport and offers a light lunch.

Club Leader Eileen has been running the club for a number of years now and has the right mix of entertainment, sing-alongs, or just giving people the opportunity to chat to each other.

### **Rendezvous Café**

We keep things light at the Rendezvous Café. You can just drop in for 10 minutes or a couple of hours on a Thursday afternoon.

Mandie and the regulars will make sure you are introduced to people and made welcome. Why not give it a try?

## **Splash and Chat**

There are currently spaces available at the swimming club. Sue and Sue, assisted by our other volunteers, will ensure that you are safe and supported whilst you enjoy a swim with other visually impaired people.

As the name suggests there is an opportunity for a chat too, when members get together for coffee and refreshments after their swim.

People from all areas of North Somerset are welcome and transport to Clevedon pool is provided. You do need to be a swimmer already, swimming lessons are not available.

## **All things Digital**

You **can** teach an old dog new tricks! Don't be put off by the words, digital, IT, online, tablets, iPads and iPhones – our learners have mastered them all and so can you.

Have you considered how useful it could be to send and receive information via email? People with sight loss can adapt the system to display the font size needed, or an audio setting can be used if that is your preference. Sounds daunting maybe, but with the patience of our volunteer tutors you soon build up a rapport where learning is fun.

It doesn't matter if it takes a while to grasp things, the volunteers all had to learn themselves and they understand the challenges. Working with the same volunteer over a number of weeks will help you to enjoy learning and achieve your aims.

The team has recently set up an Alexa system for one of our members. The device requires an internet connection, but once set up, a computer is not needed as Alexa responds to voice

commands. You can ask to listen to the radio, play your choice of music, record an appointment on the calendar, find out the time, or source information available on the internet. Alexa can be adapted to control household functions such as switching lights on or off. You can even ask her to boil the kettle – however, she hasn't quite got the skills for making the tea!

To find out more about anything IT then call Nina on 01934 419393 and she will arrange an appointment for you to discuss possibilities, without obligation.

## **North Somerset Council's website**

Testers are still needed to give feedback on the council's website to help make it better for the future. Visually impaired people have particular needs when they are using screen readers or other adaptive technology so it is important to get involved if you can. You need to be able to visit the council's offices at the Town Hall in Weston or Castlewood in Clevedon.

The one to one sessions will last for 90 minutes. For more information visit: [www.nsomerset.gov.uk/websitetesting](http://www.nsomerset.gov.uk/websitetesting)

## **North Somerset Life magazine**

The January / February issue of Life magazine contains lots of information to help you be healthier in 2018. It seems that tai chi and dancing are popular ways to improve the balance and co-ordination of older people who are at risk of falls. Health walks, which take place throughout North Somerset, are another popular way of keeping well. Support is also available to help people to Eat Well and to be Smoke Free.

Congratulations to North Somerset Council on being only the second council in the country to be awarded 'Leader' status

under the Disability Confident Scheme. It's good to see visually impaired people represented in the workplace.

The Life magazine is available in large print or audio. Call 01275 884 139 if you would like a different format so you can read the articles for yourself.

**Vision North Somerset**

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

**01934 419393**