

WARWICKSHIRE
VISION
MAGAZINE

SPRING 2023

A DAY IN THE LIFE

*A typical day for one
of our ECLO team*

**MEET A
TRUSTEE**

*Getting to know
Janet Hurrell*

**CORONATION
CELEBRATION!**

*Previewing a historic
day for the nation*



WELCOME

IN HIS BOOK *Anna Karenina*, the author Leo Tolstoy says, “**Spring is the time of plans and projects**”.

Spring is certainly a time of revival or rejuvenation, and that is most definitely the flavour of things for us at Warwickshire Vision Support.

Our magazine has undergone something of its own rejuvenation - reduced in size, but still with many stories and information which I hope will be of interest.

Our regular features will provide a client's perspective on different areas of Warwickshire, with **Southam** coming under the spotlight in the first “**Where in Warwickshire**” feature.

We're increasing the number of editions from 3 per year to 4, with editions published in the first few weeks of each new season.

Our website has had a similar rebirth with a new look and feel, which will continue to evolve over the coming months as we freshen the imagery and add more audio content.

We're becoming very social with our Facebook, Instagram and Twitter pages getting a new lease of life.

“If you're not following us on Social Media, now's the time!”

Our aim is to use those platforms to raise the profile and interest in the work of the charity with striking visuals and **more audio/video content** as part of our new approach.

Arguably the biggest of our rejuvenation plans are the **building renovations** at our office in Market Place, Warwick.



Work should start later in Spring and could take up to 6 months, transforming a much-loved, but tired building into a **modern resource centre** with a rehabilitation training kitchen and community meeting space in addition to a modern working environment for the team.



A Spring sunrise, captured on a morning walk by Keith



More on this will follow later in the year once work is underway.

I hope any project or rejuvenation plans you may have for the next few months go very well, whether they are a modest 'Spring Clean' or something more ambitious like our building renovation plans.

I'll leave you with one of the most illustrative of all poems which describes this season well:

"When all at once I saw a crowd, A host of golden daffodils; Beside the lake, beneath the trees, Fluttering and dancing in the breeze"

– William Wordsworth

Very best wishes

Keith

Keith Eales - CEO



Seeds

By one of our volunteers,
Marian Shalloe

Plant many seeds of endless possibilities

Bless them with positive intentions

Nourish and water them with love

Anticipate the new beginnings

Then your garden will grow



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Acknowledgements

Grateful thanks to all who have contributed to the magazine, whether with their time creating articles or in the design, printing or distribution.

We also thank Kenilworth Talking News Assoc for producing a digital audio version.

A HELPING HAND

By Rebecca Bourton, Senior Vision Support Officer

Getting to grips with equipment and technology that can make your life easier

Are you living with sight loss and do you struggle with completing everyday tasks independently?

Warwickshire Vision is here to help!

Our support centres offer a warm and friendly environment where you can explore the latest assistive technology and equipment designed to make your life easier and more fulfilling.

Weekly Centres

At our weekly centres in **Leamington Spa, Stratford, Rugby and Nuneaton**, we have a range of equipment to use for demonstrations, including talking watches, large button phones, specialist lighting and more.

Monthly Centres

If you live closer to one of our monthly centres in **Shipston, Southam, Alcester, Kenilworth, Coleshill, Atherstone and Bedworth**, we can arrange a demo of any equipment you are interested in.



Our **Vision Support Officers** are here to assist you, from talking scales and measuring jugs to one-cup kettle machines and pan pickles (which hold pans firmly in place on an induction hob).

Our kitchen equipment range is particularly popular and can help make cooking and food preparation much easier!

Being able to identify the contents of tinned food is a common issue for people with sight loss.



We offer **penfriend devices** and **talking tin lids** to help you, as well as lots of tips to resolve everyday confusion, such as using hair bobbles as a code for tin contents.

Our **Rehabilitation Team** can work with you in your home to identify items that could improve your home life.

There are also **IT Trainers** on hand to help navigate your mobile phone and



assist with the latest apps (some can identify tins and packets for you!)

At Warwickshire Vision, we believe that everyone has the right to live independently and safely, which is why our support centres are designed to be accessible to anyone with sight loss.

We encourage you to touch, feel and familiarise yourself with the equipment, with staff and volunteers on hand to answer any questions.

So why not come along to a centre with a friend or relative and discover how we can help you?

We're here to support you every step of the way.

“At Warwickshire Vision, we believe that everyone has the right to live independently and safely, which is why our support centres are designed to be accessible to anyone with sight loss”

By Ruth Okey,
Technology Officer

We recently discovered these clever apps that we feel could benefit the visually impaired community and we'd love to share them with you.

They are not produced or sponsored by us, but check them out!

SM Music Reader



This app is for reading music scores written in MusicXML format.

It supports drawing the score, playing and reading with a screen reader (VoiceOver/Talkback).

SM Music Reader is a free and fully accessible app that is connected to the Sao Mai online music library, which has thousands of MusicXML scores.

The app was developed by the Sao Mai Centre for the Blind, a non-profit organisation.

Estée Lauder VMA



Estée Lauder's new app helps visually impaired users apply make-up.

The first-of-its-kind “Voice-enabled Makeup Assistant” uses AR (augmented reality) and AI (artificial intelligence) to analyse the makeup on a user's face and provides audio feedback on which areas need to be touched up or blended.

It isn't brand-specific and works with any make-up.

Once installed, you simply hold your smart device with the screen facing you, then use your voice to ask it to analyse your makeup.

If areas need a touch-up, you will be instructed on where.

It seemed easy enough and I was told my makeup was beautiful. However I wasn't wearing any! (It seems less is more!)

Currently, the app is only available for Apple (Android later this year) and is free.

Why not give it a go and report back on how it worked for you!

MEET A TRUSTEE

By Deborah Kerrison, Admin and Finance Manager

As a charity, we're guided and governed through a diverse and experienced board of trustees. Today, we spend some time with one of our trustees, Janet Hurrell

So, Janet, tell us a bit about your background and what brings you to WVS?

When I retired early due to ill-health, I had spent over 37 years in the "corporate world" for Rolls-Royce plc, working in many senior roles in Human Resources.

With retirement came a change of pace and a desire to give back to the community utilising my various skills.

I registered with an online platform called REACH that matches prospective trustees and charities.

Once I saw the valuable work done by WVS, and after meeting with the other trustees, I was co-opted onto the Board.

How has your time with Warwickshire Vision Support been so far?

I started with WVS in July 2017 and it was a big shift initially to transition into the charity sector - but one I enjoyed.

It was immediately clear that the trustees and staff pulled together to help as many visually impaired

people as possible, county wide.

On my first visit to a Vision Support Centre I started to understand the challenges that living life with a visual impairment presents.

As people shared their experiences with me, I quickly realised that a simple task like going to buy a newspaper, is much more difficult for someone with a visual impairment, e.g. navigating hazards etc.

When I walked back to the car park from that event, I could see just how much street furniture there was that has to be avoided.

This was something that had previously passed me by completely.



What have you achieved as a Trustee with WVS?

I am Chair of the HR Sub-Committee where we have been developing new policies and practices for the charity and making changes to deliver the strategy review from 2020.

As an organisation, it's important we cultivate an appealing environment to encourage both staff and volunteers.

I also volunteer for another large charity which helps me to understand different approaches to similar challenges we all face.

It was very important to me that WVS stabilises and continues to build on their volunteer base.

The national volunteer pool is generally diminishing and at WVS we need to ensure that we attract and retain supportive volunteers.

To underpin this, I have championed the appointment of a full time Volunteer Co-ordinator to lead recruiting, training and supporting our volunteers.

Are there any moments that particularly stand out for you?

During Covid restrictions, I joined the team that initially contacted all our clients to check in on them and I made 60 calls a day for a week. This opened my eyes to just how vulnerable

“It's an exciting time to be a trustee as we develop the building, introduce additional services and raise our profile”

our users had become during such an uncertain period for everyone and convinced me to become a Telephone Befriender, which I enjoy very much to this day.

One of the highlights of my time as a trustee, has been the move of the charity into Market Place, Warwick.

It's an exciting time to be a trustee as we develop the building, introduce additional services and raise our profile.

What's your vision for the future of supporting people with sight loss?

I'll continue to work towards securing a larger and more diverse volunteer base, so that we can help more visually impaired people.

The new office enables us to offer more services to clients and support the hundreds of visually impaired Warwickshire residents who could benefit from our life-enhancing services.

In my time here, I've seen a huge change in the breadth of knowledge, commitment and diversity that the trustees bring to WVS. Long may this continue.

How would you describe your time as a trustee?

Very humbling.

Could YOU be a trustee? We're recruiting!

Does one of these apply to you:

Visually impaired? HR/legal expertise? Experience in IT, marketing, fundraising, clinical/social care or commercial development?



If so, visit the Reach site at: <https://bit.ly/3SeABT6> - or scan this QR code

A DAY IN THE LIFE

By Maria Dela Cruz

We go behind the scenes with Maria Dela Cruz, one of our Eye Clinic Liaison Officers (ECLOs) to check out the great work they do

A typical day as an ECLO is both demanding and rewarding in equal measure!

On arrival at each of the eye clinics we serve, I check the referral book and ask the clinical staff for the patient list for that day.

I then join the patients in the waiting area.

I introduce myself, explain my role as an ECLO, and provide information about Warwickshire Vision Support's services.

The clinic is a mixture of first timers and regulars attending for treatment.

As people get to know me we start talking.

I work closely with the ophthalmologist and eye clinic staff, but I'm particularly proud to help the patients and their families through the stages of early diagnosis.

I help them understand where to get help and support in a timely way.

Easing Anxiety

The initial consultation and assessment with the consultant can be a confusing and sometimes anxious experience for people. ECLOs provide

technical and emotional support.

It's common to get questions like; should I stop driving?... do I need to learn braille?... what is to become of me?...

It's important, in that moment, that people understand that we are there to support them.

I can explain what their condition is, what it means for them and any treatment options available.



Nachatar gets a Cocoon Glasses demo from Maria



Maria and Jeanita show Darrell a Liquid Level Indicator

“It’s important, in that moment, that people understand that we are there to support them”

I also explain techniques like eccentric viewing (so patients can learn to use their peripheral vision) as well as giving practical tips for making things easier.

Of course, for detailed medical questions we advise patients to speak with the ophthalmologist.

Practical Advice

The day often involves demonstrations of equipment such as UV shields and liquid level indicators.

I often support patients with enquiries regarding low vision aids, the registration process, which benefits

they may wish to claim, and potential transport support available.

Making links

If a patient might need a **rehabilitation** assessment, a referral is made to our Rehabilitation Team for a home visit, training or advice.

If a patient wants to learn more about **technology**, I suggest a session with Ruth Okey (Warwickshire Vision Support’s IT guru!)

I also encourage them to go to a Vision Support Centre or social club too.

Whatever their reason for attending the eye clinic, I strive to ensure they receive the best care.

It helps them manage their eye condition in a supported and informed manner, which we hope makes their lives easier!

Good to Know:
Warwickshire Vision has 3 Eye Clinic Liaison Officers (ECLOs) who support patients at **Newmedica’s Eye Health Clinic**, Nuneaton, **George Eliot Hospital** and **South Warwickshire Foundation Trust** (Stratford / Warwick Hospitals).
There is also a **Macular Clinic at Camp Hill** Ramsden Ave, Nuneaton on a Friday.

What the clinic says about Maria

“I feel this is a vital service to our patients. Some of our patients have reduced vision and Maria has a great knowledge of visual aid products.”

She can refer patients for a rehabilitation assessment to support them in living comfortably and independently.

Newmedica are lucky to have her working with us.”



From left: Kirsty, Maria, Claire and Jeanita

WHERE IN WARWICKSHIRE?

By Rebecca Bourton, Senior Vision Support Officer

We love Warwickshire and will be celebrating our wonderful county in each edition with a focus on one particular place.

This time, it's **Southam, and we spent some time with one of our clients, **Muriel Jones****



What originally brought you to Southam?

My late husband was working in nearby Bascote, so we moved to Southam over 50 years ago and I have been here ever since.

How would you describe Southam and its people?

When I first moved here it was much smaller and everyone knew each other, but now it's grown so much and spread almost to the surrounding villages of Stockton and Long Itchington.

What does Southam mean to you?

Well, it's my home and it's got everything you need.

What is your favourite place in Southam?

I like a lot of places in Southam, but in Bascote which is just outside of Southam, there is a pub called 'The Fox and Hen' which serves beautiful food. Whenever my sister visits, we always go there for a bite to eat.

As someone with sight loss, what services are there in Southam for you?

Once a month on a Tuesday, I go to the Warwickshire

Vision support group at the Graham Adams Centre.

There's always something interesting going on and I have met a lot of friends there (old and new).

I didn't even realise some of them had sight problems until I saw them at the centre. I also go to the Warwickshire Vision Club



Muriel visiting our Southam centre

Southam Facts

A market town and civil parish on the River Stowe in the Stratford-Upon-Avon District

Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, was once Rector of Southam

Was home to two World Darts Champions: Steve Beaton (1996) and Trina Gulliver (9 times)

Eastenders star Adam Woodyatt was a familiar face on Southam High St.

Southam is mentioned in Shakespeare's Henry VI part 3

on a Wednesday afternoon, which is very nice.

My favourite meetings so far were when the 'Ukeladies' played their ukuleles and sang - and when the Southam Lions came to talk, they were very funny!

Warwickshire Vision Support works with Harbury e-Wheels to provide transport into the Southam support centre and club free of charge. How have you found this service?

It's marvellous to be picked up from your door. It is free and the drivers are always very helpful and take you into the groups.

When they take you home they always wait until you're safely in your house - very reassuring.

What would you say to someone who was visually impaired and nervous about joining the Southam support centre or club?

It would be the best thing you can do because everyone there is so friendly and helpful.

When I first lost my sight I felt so alone and you don't really want to bother your family with all of that...

It was just great to be with people who understand better and you don't feel alone anymore.

I will see you there!



Southam is also the home of Cllr Andy Crump, who represents Southam, Stockton and Napton within Warwickshire County Council.

We are very grateful to Andy for his ongoing support and funding for the Southam Social Club and Vision Support Centre.

Andy is also the portfolio holder for Fire & Rescue and Community Safety.

Did you know you could be entitled to a **FREE** "Safe and Well Check"?

How to book:

If you would like a 'Safe and Well' visit and can say **Yes** to any of these criteria, call the Warwickshire Council Safe and Well Service on 01926 466 282.

- No smoke detectors
- Over 65
- Children under 5yrs old
- Mobility issues
- Medical oxygen dependent
- Long term health condition
- Smoker
- Substance misuse
- Lives alone
- Previous falls
- Sensory issues

CROWNING GLORY

By Maria Tongue, Volunteer Coordinator

We look forward to the coronation of King Charles III in what will be a majestic celebration of tradition and heritage

On May 6, 2023 King Charles III will be formally crowned as the next monarch of the United Kingdom.

The world is expected to watch as the eldest son of the late **Queen Elizabeth II** celebrates one of the most special events in the history of the country.

The ceremony will be conducted by the Archbishop of Canterbury at Westminster Abbey.

This historic occasion will take place over the course of three days, including a Bank Holiday on **Monday 8th May 2023**.

The coronation consists of the Sovereign taking the **Coronation Oath**, in which he undertakes to rule according to law, to exercise justice with mercy and to maintain the Church of England.

These promises are symbolised by the swords in the coronation regalia (i.e. the **Crown Jewels**).

The Sovereign is then "anointed, blessed and consecrated" by the Archbishop, whilst then being seated in King Edward's chair (made in 1300, and used by every Sovereign since 1626).

After receiving the **Orb** and **Sceptres**, the Archbishop places St. Edward's Crown on the Sovereign's head and Holy Communion is celebrated.

God Save the King !

CORONATION FACT FILE

Charles was 3 years old when he became heir apparent to the throne.

At 74 years old, he will be the oldest monarch to be crowned in British history.

The royal sceptre has the world's largest cut diamond at 530 carats.

St. Edward's Crown



The crown dates back to an 11th-century King and has crowned every King Charles in monarch history. It's the oldest and heaviest crown in Britain and has 4 crosses-pattée, 4 fleurs-de-lis and 2 arches.

It is made up of a solid gold frame set with rubies, amethysts, sapphires, garnet, topazes and tourmalines.

The crown has a velvet cap with an ermine band.

VIVA VOLUNTEERS!

By Maria Tongue, Volunteer Coordinator

We asked Maria Smith, one of our amazing team of volunteers about her experience with us.

How did you become a volunteer with us?

I started to think about how I'd spend my time back in 2012 as I was approaching retirement.

I spotted a volunteer post in the Stratford Herald, for the "Reader/Visitor Service" and applied.

My Dad was severely sight impaired and I did his paperwork etc, so I thought I could help someone else in the same situation.

Initially, I visited clients across Stratford and the neighbouring areas.



We look forward to the annual celebration of volunteers in June as part of national volunteers week.

We are grateful every day for the invaluable contribution each and every volunteer makes in our community.

Our team stats:

Volunteers: 185
Volunteer hours each month: 400
Youngest: 17yrs
Average: 61yrs
Oldest: 86yrs



Then, I became Visits Coordinator - in Warwick, then later, back in Stratford.

Can you tell us about your clients?

I've met and helped some amazing clients.

One lady, who was over 100 years old, shared memories of her and her husband hiring boats on the Thames with radio blaring and dry martinis in hand!

Another had worked at Bletchley Park during the war - amazing stories!

Any advice for new volunteers?

Don't put yourself under pressure by offering more time than you can give.

And always ask clients what they would like you to do so you get the best from your time with them.

I get lots of satisfaction from volunteering and I've made lots of friends.



In October 2022, our volunteers were recognised with the Unsung Hero award from the Warwickshire and Solihull CAVA. They've also been recognised with the Queens Award in 2020 and other regional accolades.

We need volunteers across Warwickshire in a wide range of activities, including fundraising. If you, or someone you know would be interested in volunteering, please get in touch with Maria Tongue: 01926 411331 or maria.tongue@warwickshire.vision

FOCUS ON FUNDRAISING

By Keith Eales, CEO

Like most charities, we fundraise continually to fund the services we provide to the Warwickshire community.

We have many different fundraising channels such as grants, collections, donations, investments and legacy gifts.

Our Grants Officer, **Matt Hinks** prepares our formal grant applications whilst **Martyn Parker**, our Community Engagement and Fundraising Officer, works to raise our profile and raise funds locally.

Individuals

We're very lucky to have people raising money for us from sponsorship, including **Pauline Parker**, who's walking 800 miles in 8 months - in her 80th year! We also have **Diane Keen** taking on the 2023 London Marathon to promote us.

Martyn completed his own 5 million step challenge just a few weeks ago, raising more than £2,000 for us.

He's looking for his next fundraising challenge (please get in touch with him on 01926 411331)



Martyn (& Harper)

One of our major funders is the **National Lottery Community Fund** which has provided 'Reaching Communities' funding over the last couple of years to support our 11 Vision Support Centres and our 'IT4U' digital skills training.



In 2022/2023 we were supported by 30 different grant-makers, including some Warwickshire County Councillors who support community work in their electoral division. These

grants ranged from £250 to £15,000.

Development

We're raising our profile with the business sector, to create new partnerships and secure new funding. We are also developing a will-writing service to enable people to leave us a legacy gift more easily.

Priorities

With our development at Market Place, Warwick, we want to fundraise for specific items like the state-of-the-art **training kitchen**.

This facility will let clients get hands-on with the latest lighting, equipment and surfaces that help keep visually-impaired people safe and independent as they make food and drinks.

Visit our website at www.warwickshire.vision for event details and information on how you can donate.

WHEN AND WHERE

Come and join us at one of our Support Centres!

We have guest speakers, equipment demos and they're a great social setting to build friendships and peer support.

We only charge £1 a session and provide tea, coffee and biscuits!

Our Clubs are a great way to socialise and make friendships too!

Please contact Rebecca Bourton on 01926 411331 for more details on any of the Support Centre or Clubs we provide.

	Area	Location	Date	Time
Weekly Centres	Leamington Spa	Chandos Court, Chandos St, CV32 4YU	Every Monday	9:30 to 11:30am
	Stratford-Upon-Avon	Samaritans Community Hub, Tyler House, CV37 6TY	Every Tuesday	9:30 to 11:30am
	Rugby	Rugby Baptist Church, Regent Place, CV21 2PJ	Every Wednesday	9:30 to 11:30am
	Nuneaton	Newtown Community Centre, Newtown Rd, CV11 4HG	Every Thursday	9:30 to 11:30am

Monthly Centres	Southam	Graham Adams Centre, St James Rd, CV47 0LY	1 st Tuesday of month	2:00 to 4:00pm
	Bedworth	Ex-Servicemen's Club, Rye Piece Ringway, CV12 8JH	1 st Friday of month	9:30 to 11:30am
	Coleshill	Coleshill Community Centre, Temple Way, B46 1HH	2 nd Thursday of month	2:30 to 4:30pm
	Kenilworth	Kenilworth Snr Citizens Club, Abbey End, CV47 0LY	2 nd Friday of month	9:30 to 11:30am
	Alcester	Malt Mill Lane Community Centre, B49 5QR	3 rd Tuesday of month	1:30 to 3:30pm
	Atherstone	St Mary's Church Hall, Sheepy Road, CV9 1EX	3 rd Friday of month	9:30 to 11:30am
	Shipston-on-Stour	Stour Court, Old Road, CV36 4HE	4 th Tuesday of month	2:30 to 4:30pm

	Area	Date	Time
Our Clubs	Atherstone	Every other Wednesday	10:30am - 1:30pm
	Kenilworth	2 nd & 4 th Tuesday of mth	2pm - 4pm
	Leamington Spa	1 st & 3 rd Wednesday of mth	10am - 12pm
	Nuneaton	2 nd Tuesday of mth	2pm - 4pm
	Rugby Hillmorton	3 rd Monday of mth	7pm - 9pm
	Rugby (VIP)	2 nd Wednesday of mth	2pm - 4pm
	Southam	3 rd Wednesday of mth	2pm - 4pm
	Stratford	Every other Thursday	2pm - 4pm

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