

mymagazine

Edition 16

Summer 2022



Celebrating our social groups

Improving Accessibility

37.5K grant for tech services

mysight
notts
Seeing beyond sight loss

Welcome!

A warm welcome to my My Magazine, we hope you're looking forward to the longer and (hopefully) warmer summer days to come!

As we return to more of a normal life after the pandemic, it's been heart-warming to see people return to their favourite activities, like our social groups across the county, our choir and sporting activities. We've got lots of exciting new things planned for the future too!

We are acutely aware that the pandemic has changed the way many of us live our lives and that's why we're investing in new services that we believe will meet people's needs in the months and years to come.

Our Tech Befriending service continues to grow as our staff and volunteers support more visually impaired people to access technology through home visits, visits to our Smart Room and through our IT group.

We continue to deliver some of our services, like Shared Vision remotely, offering people the choice of where and how they receive support from us.

We remain committed to ensuring the voices of visually impaired people are heard, both within My Sight Notts and by our partners. In April our Service User Member Involvement Team (SUMIT) was part of a review of service user engagement and as a result a new structure is being put in place. As part of this new structure, service user involvement and engagement will have its own sub-committee made up of visually impaired members, staff and trustees, which will report to our Trust Board. We will also establish a number of service user forums to focus on specific issues important to the visually impaired community, such as our Digital Accessibility Group.

Registered charity: **511288**

We'd like to thank all SUMIT volunteers past and present for their commitment over more than a decade!

We continue to work with local organisations to ensure equality of access for visually impaired people. Our CEO is working with partners in the NHS and social care to develop a new strategic vision for sight loss services across the city and county. In recent months we've also worked with organisations like Annie's Burger Shack, MHR, and Nottinghamshire Clubs for Young People at the Monty Hind Training Centre.

Of course none of this would be possible without fundraising and after a turbulent two years of enforced charity shop closures and cancelled events, we celebrated a grant of £37.5k from Global's Make Some Noise.

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Celebrating our social groups

My Sight Notts - not just Nottingham City!

My Sight Notts delivers services across Nottinghamshire for visually impaired people. During the pandemic we started to move some services online enabling us to reach even more people in the county. As such, some of our services are now running both face to face and online, giving people more choice about when and where to receive services.

Social Groups

We have five face to face social groups across the county. These are in Newark, Nottingham, Worksop and two groups in Mansfield. They provide social activities for people with sight loss including trips out to places of interest, arts and crafts, guest speakers and a good old chat over a cup of tea!

Newark celebrates 100 quizzes!

My Sight Newark took advantage of the conference call system we offered during the pandemic, using it

to stay in touch and keep everyone entertained with a weekly quiz. The group has now completed 100 quizzes! That's over 2,000 questions and answers and more than 50 hours of competition! It started at the beginning of the first lockdown and was initially a way to keep in contact with members that lived alone.

Paul says

“I've been really pleased to do the quiz because it kept us together as a group in lock down. The quiz broke the week up and kept our minds active.



Lunch at the Shire Oaks Inn

Animal magic for Nottingham group

23 visually impaired members of our Nottingham social group and their volunteers enjoyed an outing to Floralands in May. They loved meeting animals from bunnies to snakes!

Elaine, lead volunteer said:

“Some people bought plants, others enjoyed retail therapy in the shop and others petted some unusual animals! We all met up for a delicious meal afterwards.

Pub lunch in Worksop

Members of our most northerly social group met up in Bassetlaw to enjoy a post-pandemic pub lunch!

Easter crafts in Mansfield

Members of our Mansfield group enjoyed an Easter Craft Day, decorating Easter eggs and making Easter bonnets. Congratulations to Kathleen who won a prize for the best bonnet!



Stroking a grey rabbit at Floralands

Delivering services across the county

Tech Befrienders

Our Tech Befrienders can visit you in your home. If you need help getting online, need some more confidence in using tech or just want to try out a new device, smart speaker or app then we can help you whether you live in the city or out in the county!

H says

“When I began to lose my sight, I was really worried about not being able to read my books. My Sight Notts helped me set up a Smart Speaker and now I can listen to them. It’s really changed my life.

Enjoy the great outdoors

Our rambling group walks at various locations across Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire and Leicestershire. The walks are normally between 6 and 8 miles with a range of difficulty. Supported by volunteers, who provide sighted guide support they meet every two weeks on a Saturday.

For those looking for a short distance walk around local country parks and canals there is our Walkie Talkie Wednesdays Group. These walks provide a sociable environment and sighted guided support and take place every two weeks.



Ramblers enjoy a Chat

Volunteering

We have volunteers across Nottinghamshire supporting people in their homes as My Guide befrienders, facilitating our social groups, supporting people to get online and a range of other roles. If you are interested in becoming a volunteer, please get in touch!

Emotional Support

Our Shared Vision service supports people that are struggling to cope with their sight loss.

The service offers support and practical skills and the sessions are held in Nottingham or over Zoom.

Looking Forward

Now that things are settling after the pandemic, we hope to put in place plans to expand our sports and healthy lifestyles service into the county. We also hope to reinstate our arts and crafts sessions. Please see our website and social media pages for updates.



Celebrating our reception volunteers with afternoon tea!

Art collaborations

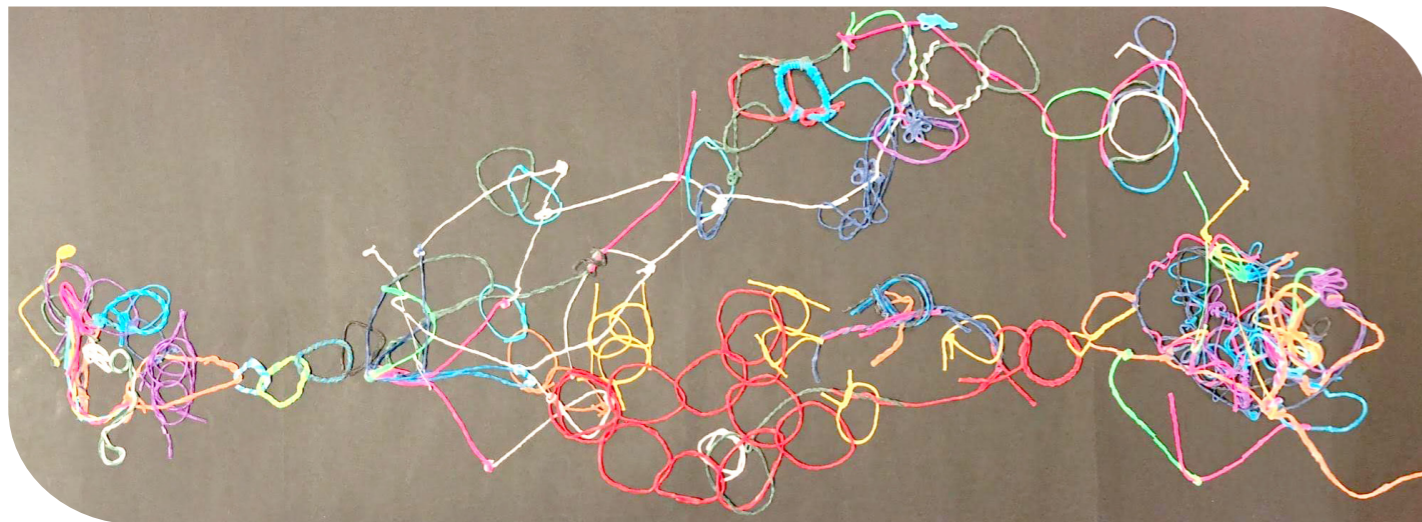
As part of our ongoing collaborations, our Nottingham Art Groups have taken part in two excellent projects this year.

In December at the New Art Exchange our visually impaired artists and volunteers took part in an audio tour of two shows delivered by the curators. We viewed two exhibitions called Cut & Mix and Laced, which challenged notions of race, gender, sexualities, class, place and identities in relation to Black British masculinities. The exhibition featured works by Black British artists spanning

from photography to film and from installation to drawings.

This tour was followed by a zoom session in February to evaluate the experience and make plans for a practical workshop in May at the New Art Exchange, where the group made their own work based on the idea of identity.

Our second collaboration was with Nottingham Trent University, when our Nottingham based art groups worked alongside second year textiles students on a new project.



A 'map of collaborative experiences' made with wax sticks

The aim was to help students develop more open minded ways of working alongside visually impaired artists who in turn shared their experience with students, helping them to be more empathetic by exploring sensory materials.

Workshops ran for five Wednesdays in March and took place at Nottingham Trent University or were accessed through zoom and chat rooms.

Join our choir!

Our amazing choir is recruiting new members and everyone's welcome!

We've been singing together for eight years and have performed in venues including The Theatre Royal for BBC's Children in Need, The Council House for Disability History Month, Wollaton Park and many more!

The choir has a wide repertoire ranging from California Dreaming to a Hawaiian lullaby!

We support people with sight loss and dual sensory impairments to sing in a fun and friendly atmosphere. Singing is good for your physical and mental health, so why not give it a go!

Our choir sing in the sunshine!



Welcome our new intern

Congratulations to Kay Dear, who has been a visually impaired member and valued volunteer at My Sight Notts for many years and who was recently recruited to work as our new Intern!

Working as a Sight Loss Advisor, Kay will be a key part of our team, supporting other people with sight loss, focusing on our Tech Befriending and My Guide projects.

The nine-month paid internship is part of the Get Set Progress programme funded by Thomas Pocklington Trust.

Wedding bells!

Congratulations to our Sight Loss Advisor, Donna Keane and her fiancé Dan Goldberg who will tie the knot in August.

Donna and Dan, who first met in March 2018, will celebrate with 250 family and friends – including some colleagues from My Sight Notts – on the beautiful west coast of Ireland.

We wish them a lifetime of happiness together!



Donna and Dan

Life-changing technology

Neil, one of our visually impaired volunteers, explains why a doorbell he saw in our Smart Room helped him feel safe and maintain his independence.

Neil tells his story; “I’ve lived in my current house for many years. There’s a shared green space at the front of the house, but despite the city council placing a ‘No ball games’ sign on it,

a group of teenagers ignored requests from me and other residents not to play with a heavy football.

“When I politely asked them to stop, they greeted me with a string of swear words! I tried to ignore them, but they decided to escalate things by taking it in turn to kick the ball at my window. Over the next few months they continued to intimidate me; using a broken wheelie bin lid as a makeshift Frisbee to hit my door and window, running into my garden, thumping my front door before running off and tipping over my bins.



Neil volunteering on reception

“Fearing for my safety, I called the police who took details and asked if I could identify the trouble-makers. I pointed out my visual impairment and was told that if I couldn’t identify the culprits there wasn’t a lot the police could do.

“I decided to get a video doorbell, which I’d seen in the Smart Room at My Sight Notts and which was quick, easy and relatively inexpensive to install.

“When the trouble-makers returned I was able to provide the police with video evidence and they were identified and cautioned. I’ve had no further incidents for over eight months, which is marvellous!

“The doorbell did its job, I feel safer knowing it’s there and pleased it collected the evidence I couldn’t see. I think the Smart Room is a great resource and I’d encourage others to come and take a look and see what’s available.”

Focus on Fundraising

We rely entirely on fundraising to pay for the services we provide for local visually impaired people.

Did you know that My Sight Notts receives around 40% of its funding from gifts in Wills? Leaving a gift in your Will helps to ensure that nobody is forced to face sight loss alone and that we have the resources we need to make sure local visually impaired people can live life to the full.

We have used income from legacies to:

- Develop our accessible centre on Heathcoat Street
- Invest in the latest tech for our Smart Room and Support Centre
- Fund many of our services including arts, sports and our Eye Clinic Liaison Service, which supports patients at QMC.

Jacky Fisher Chair of our Trustees says about her legacy gift:

“Leaving a gift in my Will to My Sight Notts is my way of supporting a charity that I care deeply about and of helping visually impaired people in my local community.

You can provide for those you love and also make a difference to the people and causes that matter to you by writing a Will that makes sure your wishes are carried out even after you're gone.

We can help you get beyond the legal jargon with our free Will writing and advice service. We are working with Amanda Harris, a visually impaired professional Will writer. For further information about the service Amanda offers, please contact Lydia on 0115 9706806.



Dale and Kevin hold one of their planters

Blooming marvellous fundraisers!

Dale and Kevin, two green fingered fundraisers who met and became friends at our Shared Vision group, got together to grow beautiful spring plants and make stunning hand-crafted planters from recycled pallets.

The two visually impaired buddies who attend our Bassetlaw social group are selling the planters to raise money for My Sight Notts. You can support them by investing in one of their beautiful planters, which will brighten up your garden or patio this summer. For more info call Lydia on 0115 9706806.

Global's Make Some Noise!

In March we celebrated a grant from Global's Make Some Noise of £37.5k! The money will allow us to extend our Tech Befriender scheme; helping us support more visually impaired people to make the most of life-changing tech.

Optical Art

When you think of your opticians you think clinical and functional, not beautiful and inspirational. Mapperley-based opticians, Charles Lea has turned its premises into a stunning art gallery, displaying works of art by local artists, with a percentage of all sales in aid of our charity.

Stephanie Lipsey-Liu, an Optician at Charles Lea, said:

“Both My Sight Notts and Charles Lea Opticians support local people with their eye health, which makes them our perfect charity partner!



Picture perfect!

Supporting local business to be more inclusive

Our charity not only provides services for local visually impaired people, we also campaign on issues that affect them and we support local business to ensure their services are accessible for people with sight loss.

Focus on digital inclusion

We've been working with two local organisations, Healthwatch Nottingham and Nottinghamshire and MHR who provide a range of market leading HR software solutions, to test their systems and apps for accessibility.

Our Digital Accessibility Group (DAG), which is made up of visually impaired service users and staff with an interest in technology put their systems through their paces at two events at Heathcoat Street.



Kay shows Sean from MHR how she accesses her laptop

Braille menus for iconic restaurant!

If you're visually impaired and enjoy eating out in Nottingham, you may be pleased to hear that we've produced some Braille menus for iconic local restaurant, Annie's Burger Shack.

Annie approached us to create the Braille menus as part of her commitment to creating a more inclusive dining experience for her customers.

Julie Scarle, Marketing Manager at My Sight Notts, said:

“It was great working with Annie on the new Braille menus and it would be great to see more local businesses follow their lead, so that a night out in Nottingham will become a more inclusive experience for everyone!”



Photo shows Donna and Annie with the Braille menu

Photo courtesy of the Nottingham Post

Owner, Annie Spaziano, said:

“It's so exciting! But I never thought it would happen, it wasn't until I got in touch with My Sight Notts and they said they could do a Braille menu. Everybody should be able to enjoy their experience with us and never feel excluded, ever!”

Raising Awareness

In May we visited the Monty Hind Training Centre on Leengate in Nottingham to talk to members of the Notts Club for Young People about what it's like to live with sight loss. We took along some of our Simulation Specs, which simulate various sight loss conditions so the young people could see through the eyes of someone with vision loss. They were then invited to perform a number of simple everyday tasks like pairing socks blindfolded.

If you work for a local organisation and would like support to ensure your services are accessible for people with sight loss or you'd like to provide sight loss awareness training for your staff or volunteers, please email us on info@mysightnotts.org.uk

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