



**Northumberland County Blind Association**  
*Supporting blind and partially sighted people*

# NoISe

**Issue 94**  
**Spring 2016**

NoISe (Northumberland Information Service for People with Vision Impairment) is the quarterly newsletter of the Northumberland County Blind Association.

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**We are pleased to announce the launch of our brand new website!**

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NCBA is your local voluntary association working for the visually impaired throughout Northumberland.

Northumberland County Blind Association (NCBA) is pleased to announce the release of our new website, designed with a fresh new look and user friendly navigation, updated with the latest information about our

services, volunteering opportunities, news and events, different ways to make a donation, and so much more. We hope you will enjoy our new site, visit us at:

[www.ncba.org.uk](http://www.ncba.org.uk)

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# Are you a strategic leader?

## NCBA are seeking a new Chair to lead the organisation in an exciting new chapter.

The new Chair will act as an ambassador for the Charity, working alongside the Trustees and staff team to lead the strategic development of the organisation as we embark on a new period of development, growth and promotion.

Knowledge of the voluntary sector and experience in strategic and business development would be advantageous but ultimately the successful candidate will be a well-networked individual, an accomplished leader in their field with a robust commercial awareness. They will have excellent communication skills, an inclusive, transparent way of working while remaining impartial and objective and have a passion for helping those with vision impairment.

We are currently in the process of developing and expanding our Voluntary Service having recently

recruited a second Volunteer Coordinator to assist in the management of over 100 volunteers and the increasing demand for our home visiting and other voluntary services.

**Term and commitment:** The Chair is appointed for a term of three years (renewable). The Chair will be expected to attend a range of other events arranged by the charity including fundraising events, speaking engagements and networking events. The Chair will be an advocate for the charity and will be required to be a spokesperson for the charity internally and externally.

**Remuneration:** The role of Chair is not accompanied by any financial remuneration, although expenses for travel may be claimed.

**Location:** Morpeth, Northumberland

## **New Chair and Trustees wanted**

### **Time commitment:**

A minimum of six Board meetings per year. The Chair is also expected to represent the Charity at various events and meetings with key stakeholders. It is expected that the minimum time commitment for this role is approximately 1- 2 days a month.

**Reporting to:** Board of Trustees

Please note that this role is likely to evolve and change as we do. We are looking to appoint someone excited by the chance to help shape a well-established organisation through a period of great change.

The Chair will be expected to attend all board meetings and follow up with any agreed actions between meetings, along with ad hoc appointments, by agreement.

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## **We are seeking to recruit new trustees to join our Board**

We are looking for people to join our Board of Trustees; who are happy to adopt the role of support and challenge; people with strategic vision, independent judgment and a willingness to give time and commitment to being a trustee.

As a member of the Board you will share collective responsibility for overall strategic direction, organisational effectiveness and financial accountability in line with the charity's objectives. The posts are unpaid but will provide you with

a great deal of experience and satisfaction and you will be reimbursed for any reasonable expenses incurred.

You must be able to attend a minimum of six board meetings per year on a Monday afternoon. We are particularly interested in inviting applications from those with experience of: Business Development, Strategic Management, Finance, PR & Marketing.

Please contact Nicola James about these roles, email: **Nicola.James@ncba.org.uk**

## **Do you want to learn how to use iPads, tablets, smartphones, or eReaders?**

Technology can make life easier if you have hearing or sight problems, but knowing where to start isn't always easy. Online Today is a new Big Lottery funded project led by RNIB that aims to help people get to grips with these technologies.

We will be holding another information session at Reiver House, Morpeth on **Thursday 5 May, 10am to 12 noon.**

During the session we will give you the information and knowledge to realise the benefits of being online and understand how it can assist you in your everyday life. You will get the chance to have a practical hands-on experience, so you try out the products yourself, as well as demonstrations.

Contact us to book your place on **01670 514316** or email: **info@ncba.org.uk**

## **Technology Open Day at Reiver House**

We will be holding another technology open day at Reiver House on **Wednesday 27 April, 10am to 2pm.**

This is your chance to learn more about a range of low vision aids and assistive technologies. A number of organisations will be on hand to give information, advice and demonstrations of equipment on the day, including:

### **Dolphin Computers**

- provide programs for screen reading, screen magnification, text converters and educational software solutions.

### **Enhanced Vision**

- developed leading assistive technologies to create a full line of superior, easy-to-use low vision aids at affordable prices.

Everyone is welcome. For more information contact us on **01670 514316** or email: **info@ncba.org.uk**

# Clubs and support groups supporting people with a visual impairment

## Update from Alnwick SocialEyes group

After our very successful Christmas dinner, where eighteen people attended, 2016 saw us continuing our monthly Friday lunch dates in The Oaks, Alnwick.

We all pay for our own meals and you can bring a sighted friend if you want. We have a lot of fun together, but amongst the laughter and chat, we manage to sort out any problems people might have with technology, accessing resources or coping with sight loss.

Last summer we ran our own technology morning to help each other better understand the iPhone and the Kindle.

If you live in north Northumberland and you are beginning to lose some of your sight or are blind why not come along to one of our lunches? You will be very welcome.

For more information, especially the dates of our lunches, please call 07540 755296.

This article is written by Rob and Catherine Davies who are members of the Alnwick SocialEyes group.

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## Bedlington Sensory Allotment Group

### Grow herbs and vegetables - learn new skills

Bedlington Community Allotment, Northumberland County Blind Association and Carers Northumberland are seeking members with a sight and/or hearing impairment to take part and keen to learn about gardening.

The group will learn all aspects of gardening including sowing seeds, potting, planting, maintenance, watering and harvesting. It's a great opportunity to join others

and be part of a community growing vegetables and plants in a friendly and welcoming environment, giving an opportunity for visually impaired people, those with hearing loss and their friends to learn new skills, raising confidence and self-esteem and an opportunity to socialise and meet new people.

There will be a chance to learn how to make hanging baskets with the assistance of our dedicated volunteer gardener, Tom Ridley who will be on site to provide demonstrations to the group.

The start date for the group is **Tuesday 12th April 2016, 10am to 12noon.** For further information on how to get involved as a member or support as a volunteer please contact:

Antonietta: 01670 514316.

Email: [volunteer@ncba.org.uk](mailto:volunteer@ncba.org.uk)

Allotment address: Court Road, off Hassop Way - behind Chester Court Care Home, NE22 6LA.

## **Northern Alliance Ushers and RP Group**

The Northern Alliance Ushers and RP Group meet four times a year. It's a very jovial group run by VI members with attendees travelling from as far as Scotland and Hull to attend meetings.

Research scientists from Newcastle University regularly attend meetings to discuss the latest news on potential cures and what's happening with RP, stem cells research and genetics. It's a supportive group, as others often understand issues someone is going through.

The next group meeting will take place on **Saturday 16th April, 2pm to 6pm** at The Bridges Hotel, Castle Square, Newcastle, upstairs in the function room.

More information please contact Colin Hetherington on 07900 960 154 or email: [colhethi@aol.com](mailto:colhethi@aol.com)

## **Update from Younger Persons Support Group**

This is an update to say we have managed to get together a few folks to meet up once a month.

There are about six to seven of us who started to meet up last August and the meetings are arranged each month. Sometimes there are only three of us due to folks having appointments etc or just found the group was not for them. We have four regulars with two or three who come occasionally.

It has been great to meet with other folks and we would love to meet more of you. We usually gather at Reiver House, the headquarters of NCBA, but we try to go out somewhere for a coffee locally to get us out and about.

If you are visually impaired, hearing impaired or both, do come and join us, the more the merrier! Hope to see you soon.

This article is written by Deborah who lives in Northumberland.

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If you are interested to know more about the group or thinking of coming along to the next meeting, please contact Trevor Watson, Information and Voluntary Services Manager on 01670 514316 or email: [info@ncba.org.uk](mailto:info@ncba.org.uk)

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**Support groups and clubs in your area** – please contact us if you are interested in attending any support group or clubs. Groups currently meet in the following areas:

Ashington, Alnwick, Blyth  
Hexham, Morpeth, Prudhoe  
and Ponteland.

Contact us on 01670 514 316 or email: [info@ncba.org.uk](mailto:info@ncba.org.uk)

## Your stories

In February this year, Catherine, my wife, and I had an opportunity to attend an RNIB members long weekend at the Windermere Manor Hotel in the Lake District. It is one of the Vision Hotels which is part of Action for Blind People and it caters for both visually impaired and fully sighted people.

The food, accommodation and the help from the friendly and highly trained staff was excellent. We would book again if we wanted a holiday in the area.

The members weekend was attended by about 50 people most of whom came by train and were collected from the local station by the hotel bus. We travelled by car via Alston, Penrith and the Kirkstone Pass.

On the Friday evening, we were welcomed by a champagne and canapé reception followed by our evening meal.

Saturday morning was taken up by a technology workshop with RNIB/Action for Blind People experts advising us on how best to get the most out of our talking computers and mobile phones. Later we booked a taxi to go shopping in the town. Four of us piled into the taxi and we asked the driver to take us to a pub, which did midday lunches. He took us to the best one in the town and his fare was only £3.50 in total! In the evening, there was live music in the hotel lounge.

On Sunday afternoon, the hotel took us on a boat trip on Lake Windermere and in the evening, we had a wine tasting session. There were a few guide dogs; everything they needed was there in and around the hotel too. We had a lovely time and met lots of new friends.

For more information visit:  
**[www.visionhotels.co.uk/windermere-manor-hotel](http://www.visionhotels.co.uk/windermere-manor-hotel)**

This article is written by Rob Davies.



# RNIB Connect

RNIB Connect is a new initiative, which aims to create a wider and stronger community of blind and partially sighted people. It will bring together the Campaigns Network as well as members of RNIB and Action Connect.

Building on existing activities and networks RNIB Connect wants to connect to these groups, activities and organisations in order to share them with more people local to you.

The community will be led by blind and partially sighted people and overseen by a volunteer community team, supported by staff.

Teams will be led by elected blind/partially sighted volunteer Community Connectors. Other volunteer roles will be available including campaigning, fundraising and peer support. Each regional team will be responsible for putting on events.

Elections for the new Community Connector roles will be held in June. For more

information about these roles, contact the team on 0303 1234 555 or email: [connect@rnib.org.uk](mailto:connect@rnib.org.uk)

RNIB Connect wants blind and partially sighted people to lead this new community. All UK community members aged 16 and over, living with little or no sight will be able to vote directly for a proportion of trustees.

The community connect team will create opportunities for people to get together with others, either by taking part in events and social activities, telephone groups or online. These can range from small, informal local catch-ups over a coffee, to larger regional events.

For more information please, telephone 0303 1234 555 or email: [connect@rnib.org.uk](mailto:connect@rnib.org.uk)

RNIB Campaigner Joyce Anderson and members of the Northumberland Low Vision Action Group took Mayor of Morpeth, Councillor Alison Byard, on a blindfold walk around the town on 20 January.

Councillor Alison Byard said: "The blindfold walk has given me a real taste of what life must be like for blind and partially sighted people. I was shocked at how easy it would be to fall over things like bins, bollards and especially 'A' boards.

"I hope to invite Joyce to speak at Morpeth Town Council's Planning and Transport Committee, in order to increase their awareness of the needs of blind and partially sighted residents and visitors to Morpeth."

Joyce said: "I'm delighted that the Mayor accompanied me on a journey I make regularly and she got an understanding of some of the many difficulties I face very day."

**This article first appeared in RNIB Campaigns March issue 23 and reproduced with kind permission.**

## **Do you listen to Audio Books? Would you like to join the Alnwick Audio Book Group?**

A group for people who are visually impaired and people who face barriers reading printed books...

- Share and discuss books at monthly meetings
- Listen to different genres or old favourites
- Hear other people's views and recommendations

If you are interested, the group meets on the fourth Thursday of each month at Alnwick Library.

April to October at 2.15pm to 3.15pm. November to March at 1.30pm – 2.30pm

Please contact Alnwick Library for more information.

Telephone:  
01670 622154

Website:  
[activenorthumberland.org.uk](http://activenorthumberland.org.uk)

## **Outreach information and advice clinics across Northumberland 2016**

Find out more about our voluntary services, demonstrations of magnifiers and equipment to help you manage on a daily basis, volunteering opportunities, or ask questions about your visual impairment.

Ashington library on the 4th Tuesday of the month, 2pm to 4pm.

Bedlington library on the 1st Friday of the month, 2pm to 4pm.

Berwick library on the 3rd Friday of the month, 2pm to 4pm.

Blyth library on the 2nd Friday of the month, 2pm to 4pm.

Cramlington library on the 4th Monday of the month, 10am to 12 noon.

Hexham library on the 3rd Wednesday of the month, 2pm to 4pm.

Morpeth library on the 3rd Monday of the month, 10am to 12noon.

Prudhoe library on the 3rd Tuesday of the month, 10am to 12noon.

If you know of a venue where you would like us to visit please do get in touch to discuss. For further information please call us on 01670 514316 or email: [info@ncba.org.uk](mailto:info@ncba.org.uk)



### Tynedale Beer Festival supports Northumberland County Blind Association as one of their three 'Good Causes' for 2016 Festival.

Tynedale Beer Festival is a friendly social event held in the beautiful surroundings at Tynedale Park, Corbridge on **16-18th June 2016**. Jointly run by Tynedale Rugby Club and Tynedale Lions Club.

The festival offers over 120 beers, 25 ciders, a wine bar with Pimms and Prosecco. They have live music and amazing street food, all served under cover in an enormous marquee.

Tickets are £12, food and drinks are purchased with tokens (6 for £10). They also offer beer sponsorships which make a great present for a family occasion, or as a promotion for businesses.

Please see their website for details and photos [www.tynedalebeerfestival.org.uk](http://www.tynedalebeerfestival.org.uk) or you can find us on Facebook: tynedalebeerfestival or Twitter @tynebeerfest

# See-Side Walk



## What is the See-side walk?

The See-side is a walk that will take place on **Sunday 26 June 2016 at 10.30am** on Newbiggin by the Sea Promenade.

Participants will walk from the Maritime Centre to the end of the Promenade at the 'Needles Eye' and back to the Maritime Centre. This is a distance of approximately 1.5 miles.

Some participants will be taking part in the walk blindfolded to highlight the difficulties experienced by those with sight loss in getting from A to B.

Through the promotion of the event and sponsorship

of those participating in the event, we hope to raise both funds for Northumberland County Blind Association and raise awareness of the number of people affected by vision impairment in Northumberland.

Why not come along and bring your friends and family for some fresh air and a walk to help support and raise awareness of the problems those living with sight loss experience.

**Entry is only £5 for an individual sponsorship pack or £10 for a family. Please contact NCBA on 01670 514316 for a sponsorship pack or for further information on the walk.**

# Reel in some cash!

## 15th Anniversary charity cash prize fishing competition at **Fontburn Reservoir on Friday 29th July 2016**

Cash prizes for adults and tackle vouchers for juniors (the junior competition is for those aged 15 and under)

All entrants will receive a free golden raffle ticket to enter the draw for 10 days free fishing at Fontburn.

1st Prize £150, 2nd Prize £100 and heaviest fish Prize £50.

1st Prize £50 tackle voucher, 2nd Prize £40 tackle voucher and heaviest fish prize £30 tackle voucher and Greg Robinson Memorial Trophy (if the heaviest fish is caught by the first or second place winners the next heaviest fish will win the prize).

Fishing lodge open from 7am. Entry fees and registration from 7am. Adults £23. Juniors £10.

8 fish catch limit. Competition time 8am – 3pm. Normal fishery rules apply. Weigh in prize presentations and golden ticket draw from 3pm.

For further details contact the Ranger Team on **01669 621 368** or NCBA on **01670 514 316**.

**“Brave a dizzy height for sight”**



**Sponsored Abseil  
at Bamburgh Castle's  
Constable Tower**

**(by kind permission of the  
Armstrong family) in aid of  
NCBA**

**Sunday 28th August 2016 from 10am**

Sponsorship £100, this includes £25 registration fee. If you are interested in taking part or volunteering on the day then please contact us on **01670 514316** or email: **events@ncba.org.uk**

All monies raised will help Northumberland County Blind Association support blind and partially sighted people in Northumberland.

For more information, visit our website:  
**www.ncba.org.uk**

Registered charity number 1102386

## Congratulations to our 100 Club Prize Winners 2016

100 Club	1st Prize	2nd Prize	3rd Prize
<b>January</b>	3 Mr R Godfrey	102 Mrs M Tiffin	144 Mr D Hoey
<b>February</b>	32 R Thompson	121 J Turnbull	88 G Armstrong
<b>March</b>	18 Mr R Fullerton	105 Mrs Mabel Tiffin	137 Mr G Hamilton

### NCBA Ebay Shop

We are launching our very own Ebay Shop in April to add to our fundraising portfolio of activities/events and business ideas. We will be relying on donations of good quality homewares, ornaments, toys, handbags and jewellery amongst other items to sell.

If you have anything you could donate, please call **Ruth Speirs on 01670 514316** to discuss suitability and possible collections. This is your chance to raise some much needed funds whilst having a good old spring clean!

Thank you





## Spring Fayre

We had a really good turn out at our Spring Fayre. The fayre was opened by the Mayor of Morpeth, Councillor Alison Byard and raised £493.94. Once again thanks to everyone who attended on the day and to all of the stall holders for their time and hard work.

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## Golden Guide 2016 plus The Happiness Issue

The Golden Guide spreads a little happiness this year! The popular, free Golden Guide is going out across the county once again. As ever it's packed with local information on Leisure, Health, Money, Care and Your Home. Brand new listings include activities from amateur radio to orienteering and allotments to orchestras, as well as updates on money, health and social care.

An exciting new feature for 2016 is 'The Happiness Issue' a 16-page supplement - taking a lighthearted look at happiness, but with a very practical message.

Editor Heather Alabaster explains: 'We explored happiness and found that our attitude to life - not just our income or health - is a major factor in how happy we are. The good news is that there are recognised ways to develop a positive outlook and improve how we feel. We wanted to share these tips because they really work. See our section on *Beating the Blues*.

**[www.goldenguide.org.uk](http://www.goldenguide.org.uk)**

For enquiries ring Heather Alabaster, 0191 386 5918, or email [heather@goldenguide.org.uk](mailto:heather@goldenguide.org.uk)

## Talking technology



### **The Mercury tablet CCTV/Text-to-speech reader.**

Mercury does both magnification and text-to-speech. You can also either use Mercury only for CCTV electronic magnification and text-to-speech or for use with all the communications apps as well. Mercury is neat, light and easy to use.

Contact Pamtrad Customs Ltd for more information on 0115 981 6636. [www.pamtrad.co.uk](http://www.pamtrad.co.uk)

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### **Trekker Breeze+ handheld talking GPS**

The Trekker Breeze+ is the next generation of HumanWare's popular Trekker Breeze navigation system, offering the most accurate, intuitive, and effective navigation information for travelers who are visually impaired.

**Key features:** Significantly improved GPS acquisition time: connection in as little as 10 seconds. Verbally announces names of streets, intersections and landmarks as you walk. Higher quality GPS signals in cities with tall buildings.

Contact Humanware for more information on 01933 415800 or email: [eu.sales@humanware.com](mailto:eu.sales@humanware.com). [www.humanware.com](http://www.humanware.com)

## Make a difference – support our services

The Northumberland County Blind Association is a registered charity and depends on outside help for many of its activities. We are greatly helped by our team of volunteers as well as many people that support us financially.

If you would like to help by: volunteering, fundraising, making a donation, being actively involved with one of our committees, making a bequest, joining our 100 club, please contact us on 01670 514316.

If you pay income tax, your donation can be worth 25% more to us just by completing and enclosing the slip below with your donation.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Postcode: \_\_\_\_\_

I am a taxpayer. Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Please call **01670 514316** or email **info@ncba.org.uk** if you would like to contribute an article or make a comment on anything you have read in this newsletter.

NoISe stands for “Northumberland Information Service for people with vision impairment”. NoISe is a free publication that is produced in large-print, Braille, audio and email. We aim to give you news about NCBA and useful general information. To the best of our knowledge all articles are correct at the time of going to print. If you know someone who would be interested in receiving NoISe or if this newsletter is inappropriately addressed please let us know.

# Leave a legacy gift in your Will

Leaving us a gift in your Will, however large or small, will help to provide a range of support services to people who are registered blind and partially sighted living in Northumberland. By remembering us in your Will you can help to ensure that our services continue into the future.

We recommend that you seek professional advice when drawing up your Will. We do not provide financial or legal advice. If you wish to find a solicitor please visit the following website: [www.lawsociety.org.uk](http://www.lawsociety.org.uk) or telephone 0870 606 2555. For further information on how to set up a personal legacy account, visit the following website: [www.cafonline.org/my-personal-giving](http://www.cafonline.org/my-personal-giving). The Will site provides a complete online service for writing a Will at [www.thewillsite.co.uk](http://www.thewillsite.co.uk)

## Address

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## Contact Us

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Company Limited by Guarantee: 4451537



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

