



NoISe

Issue 95
Summer 2016

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

Update your computer skills and get online

Keeping your computer skills up to date can be a real challenge for many people with a visual impairment. At NCBA, we provide training using specialist software that can promote your sense of independence and confidence in staying connected.

Our computer training classes can help you get to grips with your computer and show you how you can connect to the wider world through the internet, skype and social media.

A participant who attended the training said: "This course has been really useful – I've learned a huge amount and now feel much more confident in using Supernova software



and being able to use it more effectively in my work setting". Jenny Stewart, IT trainer said: "It was very rewarding seeing everyone's confidence increase during

the course and being able to answer questions that have been holding participants back".

Our knowledgeable and friendly IT trainer can help you make the most of your existing skills, or support you in learning new skills, but whatever your abilities we can help you make the most of today's technology.

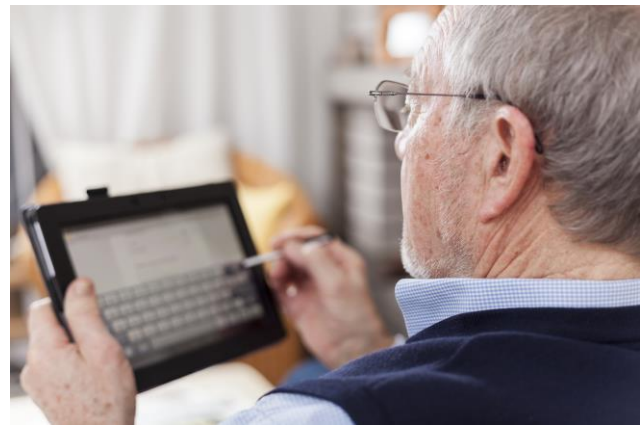
“A very rewarding experience. I learnt a lot and no longer feel afraid of my computer!”

In the classes you will learn how to send an email, navigate between websites, and how to organise files and folders and much more. We will be using Dolphin Guide and Supernova magnification/screen reading software as part of the training.

Using a computer can be easier than you think and age isn't a barrier to learning new skills. To book your place on our next course, please get in touch.

Supporting people with a sensory loss to use iPads, smartphones, or eReaders?

Online Today is a Big Lottery funded project led by RNIB that aims to help people get to grips with these technologies.



NCBA has been working with RNIB in hosting free training and demonstration events. We will be holding another free information session at Hexham Trinity Methodist Church, Beaumont Street, Hexham, on Tuesday 16 August, 10am and at NCBA, Reiver House on Thursday 8 September, 10am – 2.30pm 2016.

“A really clear and instructive approach to the subject – explained how technology can make people's lives easier.”

Mrs H, Morpeth

Join us at our annual Information Day on Thursday 8th September 2016, 10am – 2.30pm at Reiver House, Morpeth.

This year we have a number of suppliers who will be on hand to offer expert advice, demonstrations and information about a range of Low Vision Aids (LVAs), suitable for blind and partially sighted people. Sight loss organisations including the Macular Society and Blind Veterans UK, along with Action for Hearing Loss will also provide information and advice about services and support.

We are also pleased to confirm we will be holding an RNIB Online Today session demonstrating iPads, tablets, smartphones and eReaders for those with little knowledge or experience using these devices. In addition, a demonstration of the new OrCam MyEye ('a wearable device with a smart camera designed to assist people who are blind or visually impaired' – www.orcam.com) will take place on the day.



www.humanware.com

For over 25 years, HumanWare has produced a range of highly intuitive and intelligent solutions that empower people who are blind or with low vision by giving them the independence to participate effectively within a sighted world.



www.associatedoptical.com

All products from Eschenbach Optik are impressive in terms of their intelligent combination of visually appealing exterior and creative functionality.



www.uk.optelec.com

Optelec offer a growing range of assistive products, whether it be a simple optical magnifier for low vision, or the latest device to assist a Braille user to access all parts of the information world.

enhanced Vision

Electronic magnifiers for low vision

www.enhancedvision.co.uk

Enhanced Vision has been at the forefront of the low vision field since its inception in 1996. A leading developer of assistive technology for the visually impaired.



www.pamtrad.co.uk

With over three decades of experience in the technical side of visual impairment, Pamtrad offers a range of equipment and partially sighted aids that are both the latest technology and good value for money.

Free entry, sighted guide and refreshments are available on the day. For further please contact us on **01670 514316** or email: info@ncba.org.uk

Visit the NCBA website at: www.ncba.org.uk to find out about our services, resources and volunteering opportunities. The website has a dual-level text magnifier and four colour option buttons to ensure it's accessible to as many visitors as possible. The website can be viewed equally well on mobile, tablet and desktop screens.

The screenshot shows the homepage of the Northumberland County Blind Association (NCBA). At the top left is the NCBA logo, which features a stylized eye with sun rays and the text "ncba Northumberland County Blind Association". To the right of the logo is a "Donate Now" button with a right-pointing arrow. Below the logo and button are accessibility icons: three green "A" icons, a green "C" icon, a black "C" icon, a yellow "C" icon, and social media icons for WhatsApp, Twitter, and Facebook. A navigation menu includes links for Home, About Us, Services, Get Involved, Resources, News & Events, Vacancies, and Contact Us. The main banner features a close-up photo of an elderly woman smiling, with a text overlay that reads: "NCBA is your local voluntary association working for the visually impaired throughout Northumberland." Below the banner are three content boxes: "Our projects" with a photo of an elderly woman reading a book and text about a £495,924 grant; "Access our resources" with a photo of hands on a textured surface and text about a resource centre; and "Get Involved" with a photo of two women smiling and holding a mug, and text about the rewards of volunteering. At the bottom, there are sections for "Latest News" (with a "More News" link) and "Latest Tweets" (showing a tweet from May 16).

ncba Northumberland County Blind Association

Donate Now

Home About Us Services Get Involved Resources News & Events Vacancies Contact Us

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

Our projects

In 2013, NCBA received £495,924 from the Big Lottery Reaching Communities fund. This terrific sum will help NCBA fund its voluntary services and further develop its information service for five years. Find out more about how we are putting our funding to good use, with our Key Communications project.

Access our resources

Our Resource Centre has a wide range of low-vision aids and other equipment for demonstration, some of which can be given out on loan. Our facilities include a specially-adapted kitchen suitable for rehabilitation use for teaching kitchen skills to visually-impaired people.

Get Involved

Volunteering for NCBA is a very rewarding experience, knowing you are making a real difference in supporting blind or partially-sighted people living in Northumberland. You will be supported by our experienced Volunteer Co-ordinator, who will ensure that you are comfortable with your commitment.

Latest News More News >

There will be a table top sale on Tuesday 26th July at Ashington YMCA in aid of NCBA.

Latest Tweets

Tue 16 May 16
RT @tynbeeefest: @northumbria88 @pctowalduik @ncba_volunteer All we need now is lots of party loving people to come and drink it all

Low Vision Aids Assessments at Reiver House

If you are unsure about how to use your Low Vision Aid (LVA) in the most effective way or would like to learn more about the range of LVAs available, such as magnifiers and lighting, contact us for a free assessment and demonstration at our Resource Centre in Morpeth.

We can explain the advantages of the various types of magnifiers for specific tasks inside and outside the home and demonstrate the importance of effective lighting to aid you with your vision.

We have a range of devices, including:

- Pocket, handheld and stand magnifiers
- Magnifier lamps
- Task lamps/ lighting
- Video magnifiers
- Binoculars / monoculars
- Computer software for screen magnification and screen reading

“I would like to thank the staff at NCBA for their help in choosing the right magnifier for me. I was struggling to see small print on food packages and read newspapers, but my new magnifier enables me to see everything so much more clearly”. Mrs W, Blyth

For more information and advice about this service or to book an appointment, please contact us on 01670 514316 or email: info@ncba.org.uk

NCBA Volunteer profiles

We would like to express our continued appreciation and thanks to everyone who gives their valuable time and dedication to supporting visually impaired people across the county. Our volunteers really do make such a difference to many peoples' lives, in various supporting roles such as a driver, club leader, home visitor, receptionist and administrator.

Michelle Dodds has actively volunteered for NCBA for the last fourteen years. During her time with us, Michelle has assisted with administration tasks, assisting with newsletter mailings and taking part in fundraising events. Michelle recently took part in our annual See-side Walk at Newbiggin with Sue her support worker (pictured right). We have awarded Michelle with our longstanding volunteer certificate and thank her for all her hard work and dedication over the years.



Lucy Manning first started volunteering with us last September as a volunteer driver and home visitor. Since then, Lucy has been involved with various activities; assisting with the sensory group in Bedlington, volunteer driving, weekly home visiting, assisting with events and volunteer get-togethers.

Lucy has been a real help with the recent set-up of the sensory garden group at Bedlington Community allotment, in partnership with Groundwork. Without her input and support, we would not be able to run the group as her energy and input is greatly valued.

George Wilson started volunteering for us in March this year, he is involved with volunteer driving, clubs and groups, home visiting and will be assisting with the fishing competition at Fontburn Reservoir at the end of the month.

George is dedicated, enthusiastic and always willing to help out and we would like to thank him for the valuable contribution that he is making to clients and to the charity.

Kay Patterson started voluntary work with us February of this year. Initially, Kay started on reception, answering the telephone and transferring calls to the appropriate member of staff.

Kay has recently begun a home visiting role; she enjoys supporting her client who she thinks is a lovely lady and feels that they both benefit from their weekly chats.

Michael Crompton started volunteering as a volunteer driver, last October. He assists with various transport trips for clients to hospital appointments, clubs and group visits and shopping trips.

Michael is friendly, reliable and has a can do attitude, all are very valuable characteristics to have as a volunteer and we would like to thank him for his valuable contribution that he makes to the charity.

At the moment Kay is also involved with many fundraising functions and events, as she enjoys helping to raise money for the NCBA, as she feels it is a very worthwhile organisation that is valued by many people throughout Northumberland.

If you are interested in volunteering for NCBA or would like more information about our roles, please contact us at: volunteer@ncba.org.uk or call 01670 514316

We are seeking to recruit new trustees to join our Board



With a database of more than 100 volunteers, NCBA provide a whole range of services such as volunteer drivers, counselling, home visitors/befrienders, 17 different clubs and social groups, as well as a fully-equipped resource center for low-vision aids.

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.

If you are interested in applying and would like further information about these roles, please contact Nicola James, email: Nicola.James@ncba.org.uk

Where to get help with your tax

Many people find tax matters confusing, but there are ways of getting help. RNIB has a team who support people with sight loss with income tax issues. The service, supported by HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC), provides information about tax allowances such as the Blind Person's Allowance and the Marriage Allowance, which can reduce your tax bill.

What is the Blind Person's Allowance?

People registered as blind or severely sight impaired can claim the Blind Person's Allowance. The allowance is £2,290. This can reduce tax by £458 this year. You can backdate the allowance to the previous 4 years. You can also transfer the allowance to your husband, wife or civil partner.

What is the Marriage Allowance?

The Government introduced the Marriage Allowance

tax-break in 2015. It lets you and your partner share part of your tax-free Personal Allowance to help lower your overall tax bill. In 2016/17, you can transfer £1,100 of your Personal Allowance to your partner, which will save up to £220 in tax.

To apply for the Marriage Allowance you need to be married or in a civil partnership. Both partners need to be born on or after 6 April 1935. One partner needs to be a non-taxpayer, and the other partner has to be a basic rate taxpayer.

RNIB want to make sure anyone who is eligible receives this tax allowance and the team can help you with claiming them. In most cases, it can be done easily over the phone, with no forms to complete.

For help and information on income tax and HMRC related issues, you can call RNIB on 0345 330 4897 or 0151 702 5721 or email: tax@rnib.org.uk.
www.rnib.org.uk/tax

Interested in joining an Audio Book Group?

Audio Book Groups are for people who have a visual impairment or face barriers in reading printed books. These friendly groups offer an opportunity to share books, listen to new authors or old favourites, hear other people's views and recommendations, and meet new people with a shared interest.



Meetings are held once a month.

The following libraries host Audio Book Groups:

- **Alnwick Library** – meets on the fourth Thursday of the month from 2.15 - 3.30pm
- **Hexham Library** – meets on the last Thursday of the month from 1.30 - 2.45pm
- **Morpeth Library** – meets on the first Thursday of the month from 1.30 - 3pm – please contact the library to confirm venue
- **Ponteland Library** – meets on the first Monday of the month from 10.30am - 12noon

If you are interested in joining a group, please contact:

Northumberland Libraries.

Email: mylibrary@activenorthumberland.org.uk

NCBA host RNIB Connect Welcome Event

The purpose of RNIB Connect is to bring blind and partially sighted people to its heart and have much more involvement by people from the community in its work, to truly influence what it does and how it does it.

NCBA are pleased to work with partner organisations for the benefit of blind and partially sighted people in Northumberland. We hosted this new and exciting initiative at Reiver House, bringing local people together to learn more about how they can be involved in shaping their local community. The event was well attended and included a Q & A session with Claire Connelly, RNIB Legal Rights on Personal Independence Payment (PIP).

For further information about RNIB Connect and ways to get involved please email: connect@rnib.org.uk or call 0303 1234 555 or call us at the office on 01670 514316.

Fundraising news

Pledge your support to a Great North Runner

Dawn Watson is severely sight impaired and has been training hard for this year's Great North Run on Sunday 11th September 2016 in support of NCBA.

Dawn said: "The NCBA has helped me a lot since I moved to Morpeth two years ago. They helped me get back my independence, so I want to thank them by raising much-needed funds for them to continue their good work. I would be most grateful if you could sponsor me or send your donation to NCBA."

Contact us on **01670 514316** or email: info@ncba.org.uk if you would like to sponsor Dawn or simply to wish her good luck.

26 Miles Coastal Challenge from Bamburgh to Alnmouth – May 2016

A great big thank you to Alison Scorer and Sheila Parker for choosing to donate the proceeds of a gruelling 26 mile sponsored coastal walk to the NCBA. They fought rain, hail and shine, not to mention blisters and aching limbs to complete the walk in 9 hours and 40 minutes. A grand total of £210 was raised and donated for the Blind and Vision Impaired in Northumberland - a truly admirable achievement and we send our heartfelt gratitude and appreciation.



See-side Walk – June 2016

A big thank you to everyone who turned out for our See-side Walk at Newbiggin by the Sea in June. Over fifty supporters, friends and volunteers set off for the walk starting at the Maritime Centre to the end of the Promenade at the 'Needles Eye'. Well done to everyone for their continued support and stamina!

Reel in some cash!

with Northumbria Water

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

Limited places still available. 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
April	24 Mrs S Wilkinson	120 Mrs J Stappard	138 Mr G Hamilton
May	91 D Dickinson	36 R Simpson	19 R Fullerton
June	124 K Raffle	141 Mrs S Johnson	103 Mrs M Tiffin

NCBA Ebay Shop and Table Top Sale

Thank you so much for your contributions towards the **Table Top Sale on 26th July at Ashington YMCA** – we have more than enough items now. We are still collecting for the Ebay Shop although donations need to be new, designer or high value – we are unable to sell brick-a-brac or other used items.

If you have anything you could donate, please call **Ruth Speirs on 01670 514316** to discuss suitability and possible collections. Thank you!

Talking Technology



Explorē 5 handheld electronic magnifier

The explorē 5 has large, bright buttons that are intuitive and simple to use, and its key features are designed to help in every situation.

A good choice for active people with mild to medium-severe low vision who need variable magnification and contrast enhancement.



Prodigi Desktop electronic magnifier



This desktop electronic magnifier has Touch and Tap controls that are easy to learn and hard to forget. Just place your document and tap to zoom in and start reading with your preset magnification, enhanced contrast and reading mode.

We are giving **one to one demonstrations** of the Explorē 5 handheld electronic magnifier and Prodigi Desktop magnifier at our Resource Centre. Contact us to book an appointment. Further information about these products can be found at: www.humanware.com

Conference and meeting room hire at Reiver House, Morpeth

Meeting Room Hire

A 520sq ft. room seating up to 25 people with kitchenette including tea and coffee making facilities. £80 for a full day or £15 per hour (or part there of).

Desk Hire

A modern office with Wi-Fi internet, photocopying equipment, staff kitchen, WC's, free on site parking and sensory gardens. Two free days meeting room hire is also included in desk hire in addition to a reception service.

Recording Studio

This room can be used as office space for two people or as a small recording studio, with free equipment hire, 102sq ft. £40 per day or £10 per hour. **Sensory loss groups may be eligible for concessionary rates.**

For further details on meeting room, desk and office hire please contact us on 01670 514316 or email: info@ncba.org.uk.

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** 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**. The Will site provides a complete online service for writing a Will at **www.thewillsite.co.uk**

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Registered Charity Number: 1102386
Company Limited by Guarantee: 4451537



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