



NoISe

Issue 96
Autumn 2016

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

NCBA supporters brave a dizzy height for sight!

Despite the wet weather, a very successful abseil was held at Bamburgh Castle in August. Twenty six people took up the challenge of abseiling from the Constable Tower in aid of NCBA!

Bamburgh Castle named NCBA as their Charity of the Year 2016 and agreed to holding this fundraising event.

We would like to thank Bamburgh Castle staff for their assistance and to Adventure Northumberland for their expert help on the day and for settling everyone's nerves!



Safety helmets on and eager to go!

“It was a tremendous experience and although the weather wasn't the best I was determined to do it.”

Quote from participant

Bamburgh Castle Abseil – quotes from those who took part!



“We had a great time. Wouldn’t have missed this opportunity to support NCBA.”

“I was quite nervous at the beginning but I’m so pleased I did it. Hope to support NCBA at other fundraising events.”

“The instructors were very helpful and really explained everything, which was very reassuring because it was my first time doing an abseil.”



Thank you to everyone who took part and helped to raise over £3,500 and still counting!



Northumberland County Blind Association

**Keep in touch with NCBA on Facebook
and Twitter!**



**Calling all volunteers, families and friends in the
community, please join NCBA Facebook group.**



Volunteers please join the “NCBA Morpeth
Community Group” on Facebook

Our business page:
www.facebook.com/NcbaReiverhouse/



twitter.com/ncba_volunteer

At NCBA our Home Visiting Service supports people with a visual impairment to maintain their independence and to continue to live in their own home.

Our trained volunteers assist with tasks including accessing information, reading correspondence and, where appropriate, helping the person respond, accompanying them on a walk. They can also assist with shopping, organising groceries and checking “use by” dates, helping with a hobby, or just having a cuppa and a chat.

One service user said: “I look forward to my volunteer visiting me and enjoy talking about current news affairs and voicing our opinions. I listen to the news more closely now so I have plenty to say for future discussions.”

Our volunteers also get a lot from their role. David, who has been volunteering for a number of months, said: “I enjoy my volunteer

work for NCBA. As a home visitor to someone who is quite isolated living in rural Northumberland, it’s very rewarding to know that my visits mean so much. It has also boosted my self-confidence meeting new people who value my visits.”

All of our volunteers working with clients are trained in sighted guide technique and how best to support someone with a vision impairment. They are also vetted by the Disclosure and Barring Service - previously CRB.

To find out more and to make a referral to this service, or if you are interested in becoming a volunteer home visitor, please contact Susan Bennett at:
Susan.Bennett@ncba.org.uk
or call 01670 514316

Clubs and support groups are set up throughout Northumberland to combat social isolation felt by many vision-impaired people as a result of sight loss.

Anyone with sight loss can join a club or support group, whether registered or not. Carers, friends and relatives are also welcome to attend. The aim of the groups is to provide vision-impaired people with support to enable them to meet with other partially-sighted people from their own community.

The groups are supported by volunteers and are self-funding and self-motivating, enabling members to maintain independence, choice and control.

Group and area: Ashington

Venue: Bothal Cottages, Community Centre

Date and time: Mondays, 1.30pm – 3.30pm

Group and area: SocialEyes Ashington

Venue: Ashington and surrounding area

Date and time: 1st Wednesday of the month,
12.30pm – 2.30pm.

Group and area: Activities Group

Venue: Reiver House, Morpeth and various venues
around Northumberland

Date and time: Monthly basis on a Wednesday.

Group and area: SocialEyes Alnwick

Venue: Alnwick area

Date and time: 2nd Friday of the month, 12.30pm – 2.30pm.

Group and area: Bloomers Garden Club
Venue: Hepscott Park Garden Centre
Date and time: 3rd Friday of the month, 10.30am – 12.30pm

Group and area: Sensory Allotment Group, Bedlington
Venue: Bedlington Community Allotment behind
Chester Court Care Home
Date and time: 2nd Tuesday of the month, 10am – 12 noon

Group and area: Blyth Club
Venue: Scout Hut Headquarters, Edward Street
Date and time: Meet weekly on a Thursday from February to
mid-December

Group and area: Insight club, Blyth
Venue: Adult Training Centre, Kitty Brewster Estate
Date and time: Alternate Tuesday evenings at 6.30pm

Group and area: Craft Group
Venue: Reiver House, Morpeth
Date and time: 3rd Thursday of the month, 10am – 12 noon
(not August)

Group and area: Hexham Pop-in
Venue: Adapt (North East), Burn Lane, Hexham
Date and time: On alternate Fridays, 10am – 12 noon

Group and area: SocialEyes Hexham

Venue: Various locations around Hexham

Date and time: 1st Tuesday of the month, 12 noon – 2.30pm

Group and area: SocialEyes Prudhoe

Venue: Parish Hall, Prudhoe Front Street

Date and time: 3rd Tuesday of the month, 10am – 12 noon

Group and area: SocialEyes Ponteland

Venue: Merton Hall, Ponteland

Date and time: 3rd Thursday of the month

Group and area: Women's Group

Venue: Reiver House, Morpeth

Date and time: 3rd Tuesday of the month

Group and area: Younger Person's Group

Venue: Reiver House, Morpeth and other venues

Date and time: 4th Monday of the month

One group member said: "I have been to places that I would not have been able to visit, had it not been arranged by the group. It's lovely to have the chance to socialise as I live alone, so this is the only chance I get. The last trip to Beamish was fantastic. One of the volunteers took me for a walk and we had a ride on the trams and buses. The volunteer driver ensures that both my guide dog and I have transport from my home and to and from the venues where the group meet for lunch". Please contact us, if you are interested in attending any of the clubs and support groups on 01670 514316 or email: info@ncba.org.uk

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 centre of 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 us at info@ncba.org.uk or telephone 01670 514316

NCBA Volunteer profiles

Once again, 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.

Catherine Davies has been involved with NCBA, through volunteering over several years, more recently she has been assisting with the "NCBA Morpeth Community Group" on Facebook sharing news and stories about recent fundraising events and sharing informative stories.

Catherine also assists with the Alnwick Socialise group who meet on the 2nd Friday of the month for lunch at The Oaks Hotel, Alnwick.

This has been a huge opportunity to promote NCBA as a charity and to showcase the fantastic work that our volunteers do and we would like to thank Catherine for all her hard work and support with promoting our events throughout her networks.

Anne Waggitt has supported NCBA since 2009. Anne has a wealth of knowledge and has been involved with home visiting, fundraising events, supporting at information stands and assisting with the Insight Group, held alternate Tuesday evenings in Blyth.

Anne is warm, friendly and instantly puts people at ease. Anne is currently supporting Shirley with regular home visits and Shirley benefits greatly from the support she receives, Shirley says that; "Anne is a kind person and extremely efficient at what she does and I feel very secure when we are out and about together."

We would like to thank Anne for all her hard work and dedication, as we believe that she makes a real difference to the lives of others.

Sheila Hepple first started volunteering in April of this year, after attending a volunteer recruitment fair. Sheila instantly offered her support and has since been involved with NCBA's events this year including; Easter and (upcoming) Christmas Fair, Fishing Competition and as a member of the fundraising committee.

Sheila has a warm, friendly personality and has lots of energy, ideas and enthusiasm; she has been involved with organising raffle prizes for the Christmas fair; writing and talking to local businesses in and around Morpeth and asking for their support for donation of prizes. So far, the response has been excellent with plenty of generous donations having been received.

We would like to thank Sheila for assisting us with events and feel lucky to have her on our fundraising team.

Owen Cox has volunteered for NCBA over a number of years. As a volunteer home visitor, Owen enjoys visiting people who may experience isolation. He says: "Volunteering for NCBA is very rewarding and positive experience for me. It has boosted my self-confidence and I really enjoy my regular visits and chatting about the news."

We would like to thank Owen for all his hard work and dedication. We know how valued and appreciated Owen's visits make to people's lives.

**If you are interested in volunteering for NCBA or would simply like to know more about some of our volunteer roles, please contact us:
volunteer@ncba.org.uk or
call us on 01670 514316.**



Bringing services together to support people with a visual impairment in Northumberland

We held another successful Information Day in September, bringing together suppliers of low vision aids and sight loss organisations, providing information and advice about services and support. The event was well attended giving local people the opportunity to speak with representatives about their services and low vision products.

People took the opportunity to try out some of the latest products and technologies including the latest electronic video magnifiers and magnification software. We look forward to holding a similar event in the Spring at Reiver House.

The CEA Card is a national card scheme developed for UK cinemas by the UK Cinema Association (UKCA). The scheme was introduced in 2004 and is one of the ways for participating cinemas to ensure they make reasonable adjustments for disabled guests when they go to the cinema; in particular it ensures a complimentary ticket for someone to go with them.

Accessible Screenings for visually impaired people -

Audio Description (AD): this provides a pre-recorded voice commentary that describes features such as action, body language, expressions and movements. Because it fits within the silent gaps in a film, it doesn't interfere with the dialogue. The audio commentary is listened to via a headset which can be borrowed from the cinema - just ask a member of staff. For more information about participating cinemas go to:
<https://ceacard.co.uk>

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

“My new electronic magnifier has made such a difference because now I can read newspaper articles to my preferred size and colour settings.” Mr G. Waterston

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

Can you help us to maintain our beautiful Sensory Garden at Reiver House?



Tom Ridley (left) our volunteer gardener pictured with James Byard (right), assisted Tom during the school holidays with our Sensory Garden.

Tom is hoping to retire soon and we are seeking a volunteer gardener to support us with the upkeep and maintenance of our beautiful gardens.

If you, or anyone you know may be interested, please contact us: volunteer@ncba.org.uk or call us on 01670 514316.



News

Northumberland Low Vision Action Group Success

Trying to improve accessibility and make the streets safer for blind and partially sighted people can be a slow process, however, the Northumberland Low Vision Action Group (NAG) can report on a success.

If you are a Guide Dog user or use a long cane, you may have noticed that the tactile paving in Morpeth shopping Arcade (Sanderson Arcade) had the wrong tactile paving leading to the steps and crossings. In case you are not aware of the different types of tactile paving, the corduroy type (that is the long parallel ridges) is to indicate steps leading up or down. The blister paving (raised dots) is to indicate a crossing.

NAG raised the issue with the management of the Arcade and with the help of Northumberland County Council, the owners of the Arcade have now replaced the incorrect paving.

It is yet another example of why planners should communicate with the blind community before they embark on any type of building work that could affect the visually impaired - (reproduced with kind permission)

Volunteer Drivers needed

Transport is important in helping people to stay independent and involved in their community.



If you can help blind or partially sighted people attend important appointments, support groups or shopping trips, please contact our volunteering team for opportunities in your area, email: volunteer@ncba.org.uk

Registered Charity Number: 1102386

Fundraising news

Fishing Competition at Fontburn Reservoir

The 15th annual fishing competition in aid of NCBA in July once again proved to be a popular event with over 70 keen participants at Fontburn Reservoir raising £1,376.70. Bait angler Derek Hodgson claimed the £150 cash prize as the winner of the adult section. Derek's catch tipped the scales at 13lb 2oz to take 1st place, with John Rollin missing out by just 1oz!, whilst claiming 2nd place. George Clark took the heaviest fish prize, with his well-conditioned 3lb 6oz rainbow trout.



Winner of the junior section went to Lewis Tindle with his fish weighing in at 11lb 3.5oz. Steven Lee Farrier fish took second prize at weight 8lb 15oz. Kieron Hedley took the heaviest fish weight 2lb 14oz. We would like to thank the Fontburn Ranger Team and our wonderful volunteers who all helped to make the day such a success. All in all it was a fantastic day and thanks to everyone who took part in supporting us. We are looking forward to next year already! Visit our **Facebook** page to see videos of the winner's presentation.

Thank you to everyone who contributed to our **Table Top Sale in July at Ashington YMCA**. It was a busy day and we had a fantastic turnout and raised £500 on the day.

We would like to thank our all volunteers and to everyone who contributed to the success of this event.

Congratulations to our 100 Club Prize Winners 2016

100 Club	1st Prize	2nd Prize	3rd Prize
July	127 E Elliott	105 Mrs M Tiffin	29 K Campbell
August	148 E Fisher- Greeve	110 Mrs M Tiffin	112 R Potter
September	66 A Spiers	62 R Featherstone	3 R Godfrey

Christmas Fair



Please join us for our early Christmas Fair at the scout hut, next to NCBA, Reiver House on
Tuesday 15th November 10.30am - 12.30pm

Raffle, tombola, crafts, festive decorations gifts and plants, cakes and refreshments

All welcome!

Talking Technology

We are giving one to one demonstrations of the new **Traveller HD electronic magnifier** from Optelec until the end of October at our Resource Centre. Wherever you are, at home, in the office, at school or on holiday, the Traveller HD is your ideal light weight reading companion.

Its unique **Slide and Read** mechanism provides you with a more natural reading experience, especially for those people that find it difficult to keep their hands steady.



Prodigi Desktop electronic magnifier

This desktop electronic magnifier from Humanware 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.



If you would like to learn more about these products, please get in touch and book a free demonstration. For further details visit: uk.optelec.com and 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 via 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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