



Northumberland County Blind Association  
Supporting blind and partially sighted people

# NoISe

Issue 98  
Spring 2017

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

## Technology solutions for blind and partially sighted people

Information and Equipment Open Day - come along and try the latest products from some of the leading suppliers of low vision aids and solutions for blind and partially sighted people.



For the latest in hardware and software products, come along to our free Open Day on **Thursday 6th April 2017, 10am – 2.30pm** at Reiver House, Morpeth.

Suppliers of low vision aids who will be available on the day include:

**British Wireless for the Blind Fund** provides specially adapted radios, by providing the equipment on free loan.

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

Telephone: 01622 754 757

Email: [info@blind.org.uk](mailto:info@blind.org.uk)

**Calibre Audio Library** is a national charity providing a subscription-free service of unabridged audio books for adults and children with sight problems.

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

Telephone: 01296 432 339

Email: [enquiries@calibre.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@calibre.org.uk)

**Optelec** offer a growing range of assistive products, including optical magnifiers for low vision.

**[www.uk.optelec.com/products](http://www.uk.optelec.com/products)**

Telephone: 080 8090 8090

**RNIB** offer a range of products for people with sight loss, as well as practical and emotional support services.

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

Telephone: 0303 123 9999

Email: [helpline@rnib.org.uk](mailto:helpline@rnib.org.uk)

**Sight and Sound Technology**

**Ltd** supply desktop/ handheld magnifiers, text to speech and Braille products.

**[www.sightandsound.co.uk](http://www.sightandsound.co.uk)**

Telephone: 01604 798 070

Email:

[info@sightandsound.co.uk](mailto:info@sightandsound.co.uk)

---

**Free entry, sighted guide and refreshments are available on the day.**

If you can't attend the Open Day in April we plan to hold another event in September, so please visit our website, Facebook and Twitter sites to keep up to date about all of our events throughout the year. We will of course include details in the NoISe newsletter.

## Online Today helps people with sight loss to get online

A free online basic skills session is being held at Reiver House, Morpeth on **Wednesday 21 June 2017, 11am – 4pm** to help blind and partially sighted people get online and take their first steps in using technology.

NCBA are supporting the RNIB Online Today program to reach people with sight loss who would like support to get online using the mobile technology of today.

Tablets and smartphones are transforming our everyday lives – and sight loss doesn't have to stop you getting the best out of them.

Online Today can help in many ways, offering support across the UK. From home visits by our volunteers to locally run group sessions, training and one-to-one support. So whatever your technology experience or level of vision, you'll soon be doing things like

browsing websites and sending emails with confidence.

***"I feel more involved with the mainstream now; the technology I use is the same as everyone else which is brilliant."***

There will be 2 sessions per day, a group presentation in the morning with a light "hands-on-demonstration" and either one to one or small group sessions in the afternoon where you can gain more information or practice using the technology in more detail.

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

# Technology Peer Support at Reiver House

Do you have an iPad, or smartphone and struggling to get the most out of using your device, or perhaps you want to learn more about the different kinds of apps suitable for someone with a visual impairment. If this sounds like you, come along to our friendly and informal drop-in sessions at Reiver House, Morpeth to get hands-on advice and answers to your questions.

***“This has improved my day-to-day life tremendously. I can use the calendar, contacts and reminders to name a few. I feel more organised and I’m not afraid of the iPad or iPhone anymore.”***

If you don’t have much experience using these devices, or a particular problem about using your device, these sessions are for you. If you use a smartphone or a tablet and they have made a difference to your life, we would

encourage you to come along and share your knowledge and experience with others.

We look forward to seeing you at any of the following peer support meetings:

- Thursday 27 April, 1.30pm – 3.30pm
- Thursday 25 May, 1.30pm – 3.30pm
- Thursday 22 June, 1.30pm – 3.30pm
- Thursday 27 July, 1.30pm – 3.30pm
- Thursday 24 August, 1.30pm – 3.30pm
- Thursday 28 September, 1.30pm – 3.30pm
- Thursday 26 October, 1.30pm – 3.30pm
- Thursday 23 November, 1.30pm – 3.30pm

Contact us on **01670 514316** or email: **info@ncba.org.uk**

# Bedlington Sensory Allotment Group

The allotment group meets once a month at Bedlington Community Allotment, or more often if people want to follow our plants growing.

The allotment has several raised beds, and a polytunnel which serves as greenhouse and shelter in poor weather.



Members of the Sensory Allotment Group potting up some plants!



Volunteer Lesley Tweddle

We grow flowers, herbs, salads and vegetables, starting from seed or cuttings. We have plenty of time to sit in the sun and drink tea and chat! In wintertime, we meet indoors to do craft activities, chat and drink tea. We always have a brilliant time.

If you would like to become a member or assist with volunteering, then please get in touch by contacting Antonietta on **01670 514 316** or Lesley **01670 519 575** to find out more. You would be made to feel welcome, make new friends and learn new skills.

# SightPlus – electronic glasses helping people make the most of their remaining sight

The SightPlus headset is a wearable, hands-free and comfortable device that will enhance someone's remaining sight and allow them to recognise text and objects in the distance, read or watch TV comfortably, see faces from across the room or simply sit in the park and watch life come back into focus.

SightPlus™ was designed to offer users with low vision the ability to make the most of their remaining sight.

Significant improvement has been achieved in many users, even those with poor vision. The easy-to-use, wearable and hands-free device allows for TV viewing, hobbies, reading, games and facial/expression recognition.

SightPlus™ combines the company's proprietary software along with existing Augmented / Virtual Reality hardware to provide an off-the-shelf high-tech aid for people living with a range of severe sight impairments.

Acting like a sophisticated wearable magnifier, it helps partially sighted users to achieve clearer vision, both up close and at a distance.

***“These goggles have made me excited to discover something new everyday.”***

For further information and a better idea of what the device is and does, please visit:

**<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/technology-38168160>**

---

**GiveVision**, a London based startup, was founded out of a passion to help people with a visual impairment achieve independent and fulfilling lives.

The company is currently in an Open Beta Test phase with SightPlus™ headset.

**[www.give-vision.com](http://www.give-vision.com)**

## Become a volunteer

There are lots of ways to volunteer with NCBA. It's a great way of meeting people, gain new skills and experiences.

Benefits of volunteering:

- Give something back
- Help others
- Enjoy new experiences
- Do something positive
- Learn new skills
- Increase confidence and self esteem
- Receive training and support

All of our volunteers who support clients on a one to one basis are trained in sighted guide technique and how best to support someone with a visual impairment. They are also vetted by the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).

Hours for most roles are flexible and out-of-pocket expenses, such as mileage,

phone calls and parking fees will be reimbursed. To find out more about our opportunities please contact our friendly Volunteer Coordinators, Susan Bennett or Antonietta D'Angelo Worn, on **01670 514316**, email: **volunteer@ncba.org.uk**

---

## Volunteering Opportunities

### Driver – Insight Support Group

We are the Insight Club, a group with sight impairment.

We meet at The Riverside Resource Centre, Kitty Brewster Estate, Blyth. We meet on a fortnightly basis, on Tuesday evenings from 6.30pm – 9pm.

Some of our members live in Cramlington and Blyth – for some of the members it can be the only time they get to socialise with like-minded people.

Unfortunately, our present driver, who has been with the group for several years, has



decided to call it a day later this year, therefore, we are looking for a volunteer to take his place.

Guidance and a full explanation of the role will be given by the present driver.

If you think you can help, please contact NCBA, telephone **01670 514316** or email:

**volunteer@ncba.org.uk** as your help will be much appreciated.

**Please note:** drivers must be between 21 – 70 years of age and driving for at least 3 years.

---

### **Home visitor – Alnwick**

We are seeking someone to befriend a partially sighted lady who lives in the Alnwick area on a regular basis. She lives in a residential setting and is keen to get out more visiting shops in Alnwick town centre.

Please contact Susan Bennett our Volunteer

Coordinator if you are interested in this role, telephone **01670 514316** or email:

**homevisitors@ncba.org.uk**

Volunteers need to be over the age of 18 years and able to travel independently. If you are reliable, punctual and trustworthy we would like to hear from you.

### **What you can expect from us:**

- DBS checks
- Volunteer policy
- Expenses reimbursed
- Written role description
- Ongoing support
- Training provided
- Equal Opportunities policy
- Volunteer induction





## Hexham Pop-in Club (1992 - 2016)

Hexham Pop-in Club has been a longstanding support group for vision impaired people for over 24 years. It was first established in 1992 by Age UK and continuously supported by Northumberland County Blind Association.

In July 1998, the group received £4,350 from the National Lottery and with this they created a booklet of poems called "Picking up Sunshine" which was sold and distributed throughout Tynedale.

During September 2008 "The Yew Tree", a book of poems and thoughts created by vision impaired members, was presented to the Countess of Wessex, Sophie wife of Prince Edward, during her visit to Northumberland County Blind Association.

Jim Clark (club treasurer) stated that, "The group have seen some amazing times and throughout the

years, the club had many members". However, since 2002 the number of members began to decline and particularly within the last year. As a result, the club organisers decided that the December 2016 meeting would be their last.

The club decided that they would celebrate their amazing achievements with a cheerful farewell Christmas meal. Pat White group organiser and Jim Clark (club treasurer) together with the volunteers and members, met to share stories and reminisce about the many exciting activities the group have been involved with over the years.

The Club would like to thank their volunteers from Northumberland County Blind Association and Adapt transport who have assisted with transporting members to and from Hexham over the years.

## **Hexham SocialEyes**

**group** will be continuing as normal on 2nd Tuesday of the month from 12 noon to 2.30pm. Please contact Des Milburn for further information, telephone: 01434 394 156 or NCBA on 01670 514316.

---

## **Clubs and Groups in your area:**

**Ashington Group**, Bothal Cottages Community Centre, Mondays, 1.30pm – 3.30pm

**Ashington SocialEyes**, 1st Wednesday of the month, 12.30pm – 2.30pm

**Activities Group** meets at Reiver House, Morpeth and various venues around Northumberland on a monthly basis on a Wednesday.

**Alnwick SocialEyes** 2nd Friday of the month, 12.30pm – 2.30pm

**Bedlington Sensory Allotment Group** 2nd Tuesday of the month, 10am – 12noon.

## **Bloomers Garden Club**

meets at Hepscoth Park Garden Centre on 3rd Friday of the month, 10.30am – 12.30pm.

**Blyth Club** meets at Scout Hut Headquarters, Edward Street meet weekly on a Thursday.

**Craft Group** meets at Reiver House, Morpeth on 3rd Thursday of the month, 10am – 12noon.

**Prudhoe SocialEyes** meets at the Parish Hall, Prudhoe Front Street on 3rd Tuesday of the month, 10am – 12noon.

**Ponteland SocialEyes** meets at Merton Hall, Ponteland on 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of the month.

**Women's Group** meets at Reiver House, Morpeth 3rd Tuesday of the month.

Call us on **01670 514316** if you would like further information about attending any of the above clubs and groups.

# RNIB Campaigns update

## Need it to Read it

All health and adult social care providers in England are now required to provide medical information in a format that blind and partially sighted people can access.

This is thanks to the NHS England Accessible Information Standard (also known as SCCI 1605) which mandates that anyone providing a service on behalf of NHS England or in adult social care must provide information in a format that their patients can access. This includes appointment letters, leaflets, letters regarding treatment and conditions as well as the dispensing labels on prescriptions.

If you need your NHS information in an alternative format, or know someone who does, your GP or hospital clinic will need to be officially notified about which format is required.

## Talking ATMs

The ability to manage your own finances and remain independent is essential. To support this, RNIB are calling for ATMs in the UK to talk to customers. 'Make Money Talk' campaign has had some real success working with major high street banks to encourage them to make their cash machines, and branches in general, more accessible to blind and partially sighted people.

Currently the following banks provide talking ATMs at most of their branches: Barclays, Lloyds, Halifax, Sainsbury's bank, TSB, Nationwide, Santander.

To find out where your nearest talking ATM is, visit: [www.link.co.uk/atm-locator](http://www.link.co.uk/atm-locator) where you can search by town or post code.

Reproduced with kind permission.

Northumberland County Blind Association

# **Easter Fayre**

Tuesday 11th April 2017  
10.30am – 1pm

At the 'Scout Hut' next to Reiver House,  
Staithes Lane, Morpeth, NE61 1TD.



Tea & Coffee, Raffle, Tombola, Cake Stall,  
Chocolate Stall, Easter quiz and much, much  
more!

All proceeds go towards supporting blind and  
partially sighted people living in  
Northumberland.

**Everyone welcome, please drop by and support us!**

## Congratulations to our 100 Club Prize Winners 2017

100 Club	1st Prize	2nd Prize	3rd Prize
<b>January</b>	36 R. Simpson	125 Joan Raffle	43 Mrs E. Cowan
<b>February</b>	14 Ms S. Wilkinson	51 Ms F. Clark	7 A. Speirs
<b>March</b>	35 D. Skuse	50 Mrs J.M. Stacey	59 G. Phillips

### **OrCam MyEye - the world's most advanced wearable assistive technology solution**

For people who are blind, visually impaired, or have dyslexia, aphasia or other conditions. Hear any text, appearing on any surface. Recognize the faces of people in your life. Identify supermarket products and money notes.

A demonstration of the **OrCam MyEye** will take place at St Christophers House, Abbey Meadows, Morpeth on **Thursday 25th May 2017**, 10am start.

Anyone interested in attending, please contact Christine on **01670 513 042** or **07908 513 042**

# **Macular Week 2017**

## **26 June – 2 July**

Smokers are more likely to develop age-related macular degeneration.

**Macular Week** is all about increasing awareness of macular conditions, as well as highlighting the importance of research funding, which could eventually help to find a cure for macular disease.

Get involved - contact Debbie Smith  
telephone: 01264 326 620  
email: [debbie@macularsociety.org](mailto:debbie@macularsociety.org)  
**[www.macularsociety.org/macularweek](http://www.macularsociety.org/macularweek)**

---

**Morpeth Macular Support Group**  
meets on the 4th Thursday of every month,  
between 10am - 11.15am  
at St Christophers House,  
Abbey Meadows,  
Morpeth, NE61 2BE.

Telephone the Group Leader,  
Christine on **01670 513 042** or  
**07908 513 042** for further information  
about this group.

# Useful Organisations

**Ageing Well in Northumberland – supporting older people to stay active, well and connected to their family, friends and community.** Telephone 01670 629 000 or email: [involvement&servicedevelopment@northumbria.nhs.uk](mailto:involvement&servicedevelopment@northumbria.nhs.uk)

Ageing Well groups and forums for people with long term conditions, learning disabilities, dementia or for older people to share information, have a say on social care and health issues and meet a range of professionals who can help.

---

**BID Services Northumberland**, Office 3D, Austin House, Sanderson Arcade, Morpeth, Northumberland, NE61 1NS. Telephone: 01670 293 150. Email: [info@bidnorthumberland.org.uk](mailto:info@bidnorthumberland.org.uk)

Providing a range of resources and practical support to enable people with a visual impairment to live independently as possible in their own homes, including: rehabilitation support, orientation and mobility training, identification and installation of VI aids and equipment.

---

**Macular Society**, Helpline: 0300 3030 111, Email: [help@macularsociety.org](mailto:help@macularsociety.org). General enquiries, telephone: 01264 350 551. Email: [info@macularsociety.org](mailto:info@macularsociety.org)

The Macular Society is the national charity for anyone affected by central vision loss. They provide free information and support to improve lives and ensure no one has to face macular disease alone. Morpeth Macular Support group meet on the 4th Thursday of the month, 10am – 11.15am, telephone: 01670 513 042.



We are seeking an enthusiastic person to

## **Chair the Board of Trustees**

and lead the organisation in an exciting new chapter, 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.

We are looking to appoint someone excited by the chance to help shape a well-established organisation through a period of great change.

---

If you are interested in applying or would like further information, please email:

**info@ncba.org.uk** or call **01670 514316**

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.

You must be able to attend a minimum of six board meetings per year on a Monday afternoon and be willing to attend meetings for any working groups that you choose to join.

---

If you are interested in applying or would like further information, please email:

**info@ncba.org.uk** or call **01670 514316**

# Talking Technology

## 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.



---

The all-new portable **RUBY 7 HD** makes reading easier. Weighing only **510 grams**, the 7-inch high-brightness screen and **low starting magnification level of 2x** provides easier orientation and a greater overview when reading from newspapers and magazines.



If you would like a one to one demonstration of the Prodigi or Ruby at our Resource Centre, please call us on **01670 514316** or email: **info@ncba.org.uk** to book an appointment.

# 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 thereof).

## 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](mailto: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](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

Reiver House  
Staithes Lane  
Morpeth  
Northumberland  
NE61 1TD

## Contact Us

Telephone: 01670 514316  
Email: [info@ncba.org.uk](mailto:info@ncba.org.uk)  
Website: [www.ncba.org.uk](http://www.ncba.org.uk)



@ncba\_volunteer



[www.facebook.com/NcbaReiverhouse](http://www.facebook.com/NcbaReiverhouse)



Registered Charity Number: 1102386