

Vision Northumberland

InSight - Spring 2025



Dear Friends,

We welcome you again, this time to our Spring Newsletter. You'll see from articles about our Information and Equipment Day, our VE Celebrations and our Chatter Box Café, just how busy we have been, and I must sincerely thank all those people, especially our volunteers and our staff who made it all possible.

I especially note, with very grateful thanks to Morpeth Lions, our revitalised Sensory Garden which they've been working very hard on over the past few months. In the spring sunshine it's looking really beautiful and I hope that as many of you as possible will be able to enjoy it.

Best wishes, Sue (Chair of the Board)

Information & Equipment Day

Our annual Information and Equipment Day was another great success. There was plenty of support and advice available from ourselves, Macular Society, Carers Northumberland, Age UK, HealthWatch and Thriving Together.



We were also lucky to have RNIB, Synapptic, Humanware, Associated Optical and Optelec attend to demonstrate the latest equipment available.

We hope you enjoyed the day and got everything you needed, if not, please get in touch with Helen who will be happy to help.

Tel: 01670 514316 or Email: helen.wade@vision-northumberland.org



VE Celebrations

May marked the 80th anniversary of our victory in Europe. To celebrate, we held a client luncheon where our fantastic café volunteers served up a war-time themed menu.



A great time was had by all and we hope to see everyone at our next lunch event.



A huge thank you to our café volunteers and drivers for their support which means so much. It would be impossible to do it without you.

Chatter Box Café

Our Chatter Box Café continues to be popular and it's lovely to see new people joining each week.

We have now reopened the café on Thursdays too, so come join us, make new friends and try our homemade scones, lattes and cakes.

Refreshments are FREE.



Open Tuesdays and Thursdays 10.00am - 12.30pm.

New Activity - Cornhole

Want to do something different? Come and give Cornhole a go! This simple, bean bag throwing game is accessible for all and lots of fun. Everyone's welcome - free refreshments.

At Reiver House, Staithes Lane, Morpeth

Tuesdays, 10.30am - 11.30am



Volunteering Spotlight



Our team of incredible volunteers are at the centre of the work we do. Their dedication, passion and generosity help support our clients by assisting the provision of essential services. One of these is our Volunteer Transport Service. This began in 2007 as a small project transporting clients to hospital and low vision appointments at our resource centre.

We have since expanded, adding transport to and from social activities such as our camera club, craft club, café, reading group, luncheons, social clubs and many more. Vision Northumberland's 16 volunteer drivers have become a lifeline for many, carrying out over 1,600 journeys in 2024.

Our drivers come from all walks of life and play an integral role within our organisation. We are so incredibly grateful to each and every volunteer who gives their time to us and our clients. One such volunteer is Malcolm who has been volunteering with us since 2023.

Malcolm retired in 2021 after almost 60 years driving coaches and trucks. After retiring and then losing his younger brother, Malcolm was at a low ebb when a suggestion from a therapist led him to us.

Malcolm says "Driving is something that I love to do. I love chatting to other people, and volunteering has enabled me to meet lots of interesting people. I get on really well with the clients, we enjoy putting the world to rights as we drive to an appointment or to a social group. I hope the clients see me not only as a driver but also as a friend. I have found volunteering very rewarding.

Give it a try!"



Deaf Awareness Week May 2025

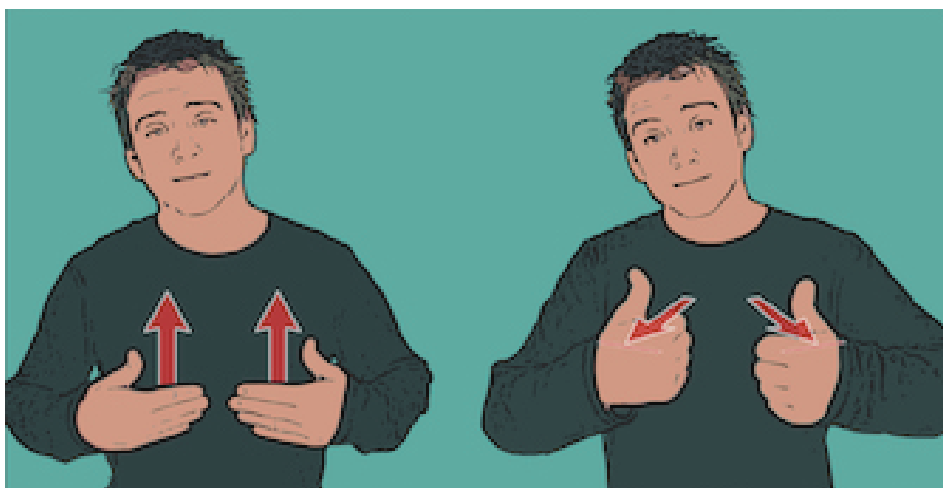
This 'Deaf Awareness Week' we thought about what we, or a member of the public could do to help towards understanding the deaf and hearing impaired community better. One of the main challenges faced is communication, so our Hearing Coordinator Sandra has put together tips for speaking to someone with a hearing loss:

- Ask if they need to lipread, even if they are wearing hearing aids.
- Make sure you have the person's attention before you start speaking.
- Find a place to talk that has good lighting, away from noise.
- Turn your face towards them so they can easily see your lips.
- Speak clearly, use normal lip movements and facial expressions.
- If someone doesn't understand what you've said, try saying it in a different way.
- Keep your voice down; it's uncomfortable for a hearing aid user if you shout and it can look aggressive.
- Get to the point; use plain language and don't waffle.
- If all else fails write it down, a deaf person will not be offended.

As well as lipreading, some deaf people communicate using British Sign Language (BSL - a language where people use their hands and facial expressions to communicate). It might be nice to learn how to say Hello to someone who uses BSL as the Deaf person will really appreciate the fact that you are trying.



Hello/Goodbye



How are you?

Sensory Garden

The final parts of our sensory garden, the fencing and gates, are now in place - all ready for us to enjoy scones and tea on the patio.

We would like to extend a huge thank you to Morpeth Lions for their kind donation of £300 towards the cost. Morpeth Lions work tirelessly to raise funds for good causes as well as volunteering extensively within the local community. We are extremely fortunate to have their support.

We would also like to thank Pioneer Trees and Landscaping for their excellent work. As the contractors for the project, they have gone above and beyond to create a safe and welcoming space.

Bargain Wednesday!!

Pop in to Reiver House on Wednesday 11th June and grab yourself an amazing deal! Open 10am - 4pm.

We have a selection of pre-owned household aids, magnifiers and hearing equipment for just £5 each.



EVERYTHING

£5

CASH ONLY

Wallington Hall

Working with Vision Northumberland, The National Trust are striving to bring Wallington Hall to life for people with a vision impairment; creating a visitor experience where items will be described, touched, listened to and even smelt.

Visitor Experience Officer, Natalie Warren and Senior Collections and House Officer, Robert Thompson invited some of our Trustees to discuss what could be done to enhance accessibility at the property. Our Trustees were delighted to spend a sunny day at Wallington Hall, visiting various parts of the incredible house, pointing out what could be done. Trustee Richard, being severely sight impaired, was a great help during the tour.

Wallington aim to have guides to walk people around, as well as guides stationed in corridors, rooms and outside. They wish to create a 'touch tour' of tactile items with audio descriptions for the key rooms, an audio tour and provide guides in Braille.

Bequeathed to the National Trust in 1942, the estate has so many stories to tell that aren't just for the sighted. The new resources will make the building, paintings, ceramics, and furniture come alive; words painting pictures where a blind person cannot see them.

These new additions will compliment their existing accessibility features such as steps with handrails, visible seating, level shop and café access to name a few. Wallington is an amazing venue with superb grounds - well worth a visit.





Play & support us!!

Would you like to make a difference and have a chance to win £25,000?

Join the Northumberland Lottery and help local people with sight loss to live life to the fullest.

£1 per ticket (50p goes direct to Vision Northumberland)

1 in 50 chance to win 🏆 Top prize: £25,000

Play now at: www.northumberlandlottery.co.uk/support/vision-northumberland

Sunday 13th July 2025, 10.00am - 4.00pm

This years Picnic in the Park is fast approaching!

The free annual family event held in Carlisle Park is a wonderful afternoon filled with music, entertainment, laughter and shared memories.



Sandra and Helen, from Vision Northumberland, will be there with information and advice on hearing and sight loss. Why not come along and say HI.

Bellingham Drop In

Helen and Sandra will also be at the Lunch Club in Reed Hall, Bellingham on Monday 14th July 2025, 11.00am - 2.00pm.

They will be available to answer any questions about living with visual or hearing impairments and demonstrate equipment to make life easier. Everyone welcome, so pop in!

100 Club News

We would like to say a huge thank you to everyone who has bought shares in this years 100 Club. This quarter's lucky winners have now received their prizes. Good luck to everyone in the next draw.

Feb: 1st - AP (£44) 2nd - TA (£30) 3rd - JL (£12)
Mar: 1st - GR (£44) 2nd - JW (£30) 3rd - MA (£12)
Apr: 1st - AH (£44) 2nd - TF (£30) 3rd - DC (£12)

100 Club application forms can be requested by calling 01670 514316 or emailing us on info@vision-northumberland.org


Your Donations

Vision Northumberland works hard to get funding to provide the services and support needed by so many. If you can help us with a donation large or small, we would be so grateful. Donations enable us to continue the great work that our staff and volunteers deliver to people with a sensory impairment living in Northumberland.

If you are considering leaving a gift in your Will, no matter the size, it would help us fund important long-term projects that will make a deep and meaningful impact on many peoples lives. We recommend seeking professional advice when drawing up your Will.

Thank you

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