Warwickshire Vision Summer 2018

Front cover: Picture of Martyn Parker and his Guide Dog, Wheeler

Contents

[The Seaside – a poem by Jackie Saich 2](#_Toc517332514)

[Editorial 3](#_Toc517332515)

[News from Warwickshire Vision Support 3](#_Toc517332516)

[Louise Jelley 3](#_Toc517332517)

[Phil’s Blog 4](#_Toc517332518)

[Strategy 5](#_Toc517332519)

[My Sight Update 6](#_Toc517332520)

[Joan’s Story 6](#_Toc517332521)

[David’s Story 7](#_Toc517332522)

[Tina Jackson 8](#_Toc517332523)

[Open Forum Report 8](#_Toc517332524)

[Open Forum-15th  October 2018 10](#_Toc517332525)

[Health and Wellbeing 11](#_Toc517332526)

[Health Information Week 11](#_Toc517332527)

[Falls 11](#_Toc517332528)

[Are You a Diabetic? 12](#_Toc517332529)

[Some facts about Diabetes 14](#_Toc517332530)

[The Sugar Tax 14](#_Toc517332531)

[AMD Research 14](#_Toc517332532)

[My Arthritic Toe 15](#_Toc517332533)

[Foot Health 15](#_Toc517332534)

[Don’t be Depressed 16](#_Toc517332535)

[Ten Amazing Eye Facts 16](#_Toc517332536)

[National Eye Health Week 17](#_Toc517332537)

[Facts and Features 17](#_Toc517332538)

[My Story 17](#_Toc517332539)

[Pavement Hazards 19](#_Toc517332540)

[Scamming Crime 20](#_Toc517332541)

[Citizens Advice 20](#_Toc517332542)

[Voting 21](#_Toc517332543)

[BT Basic could save you money 21](#_Toc517332544)

[BT 195 Card 22](#_Toc517332545)

[Know Your Rights under GDPR 22](#_Toc517332546)

[Leisure 24](#_Toc517332547)

[Dippy is on Tour 24](#_Toc517332548)

[RSC 24](#_Toc517332549)

[Why not Join Us? 26](#_Toc517332550)

[VocalEyes 26](#_Toc517332551)

[Acknowledgements 26](#_Toc517332552)

# The Seaside – a poem by Jackie Saich

Suntan lotion, buckets and spades,

hotels needing chambermaids.

Rooms are ready to receive

the trippers on their yearly leave.

Sticks of rock, ice cream vendors,

Grandma loosens her suspenders!

The dreaded handkerchief appears

knotted four-square around the ears.

Heaving bosoms, bright red skin,

the sights you see just make you grin.

Us locals watch the fun and games,

resigned to taking all the blame!

Sunburn, cold sea, insect bites,

crowded deckchairs, noisy nights.

We grin and bear it, keep taking their dough,

’cause pretty soon they’ll have to go.

The Dotto train will have a rest,

they’ve seen it all and at its best.

The season ends, and off they go

sunburnt and happy - Cheerio!

# Editorial

Thank you. Thank you for deciding to continue receiving this magazine, Warwickshire Vision, by completing your General Data Protection Regulation form. The editorial team appreciates that you have chosen to continue receiving the magazine and hopes that you will find this Summer 2018 issue interesting and informative.

We are delighted that we had a second Co-editor for this edition - Jackie.

The longest day of the year has now passed and the weather has been quite variable, but the longer days tend to lift the spirits.

A recent news item announced that a cornea had been printed - medical research into diseases and conditions continues.

Green, White and Violet were the colours chosen by the Suffragettes, representing their slogan, Give Women Votes. Their campaign for women’s suffrage took years and they were fighting an establishment led by men. Suffragettes were sent to prison for civil disobedience where they went on hunger strike and were then force-fed. Their health suffered and some women died for the cause. This year, 2018, it is 100 years since some women won the vote and it is being marked.

There are personal stories included in this edition. There is also information on events and a number of health issues.

Please don’t forget that we are always pleased to hear from our readers and listeners. If you would like something included in our Christmas issue, contact us before 21st September.

We hope you enjoy the summer.

# News from Warwickshire Vision Support

## Louise Jelley

Hi, I joined the team at Warwickshire Vision Support in March as the Fundraising Officer. As my work title suggests I am responsible for raising funds in order that Warwickshire Vision Support can continue to provide its full range of charitable services. I will be doing this by making applications to UK based Trusts and Foundations, through Corporate Sponsorship, community fundraising activities and legacy donations from Wills.

I have already visited some of the Vision Support Centres and Clubs and have made one Home Visit in order to ‘get to know’ our beneficiaries, you. In my first 6 weeks I met some lovely people who kindly allowed me to ‘interview’ them so that I can create case studies to assist with my applications. I would like to say a big ‘thank you’ to all of you, firstly, for making me feel very welcome and secondly, to those who have agreed to be my interview subjects.

My background prior to joining Warwickshire Vision Support was in policing having spent 20 years in Norfolk as a Constable, Sergeant and then Detective Inspector, so, if those of you that I interviewed felt they were being interrogated the truth is you probably were!

I left the police service in 2010 when my family relocated to Northamptonshire and then moved into Warwickshire at the end of 2015.

I have two teenagers, one boy and one girl whom I continually ferry to piano, rugby or netball. As a parent I feel as if I am constantly making mistakes and every day is a new lesson for me on how the teenage brain works!

I have an over active imagination and have been channelling this creativity in to writing my first novel. I have completed my manuscript and now need to edit, edit, edit. If it ever gets published I would describe it as ‘a love story with a paranormal twist’; watch this space.

My role as Fundraising Officer is a totally new challenge for me, which I am really embracing and enjoying. I literally have hit the ground running and my aim for 2018 is to not let you down.

## Phil’s Blog

(from the Chief Executive)

Nuneaton Club Update

I am very pleased to tell you that we will soon re-launch the Nuneaton VIP Club. Since the club closed down last year, we have been working hard to recruit new volunteers, establish levels of local interest and find out what type of club is wanted.

We are now nearing a point where we will be confirming the venue and agreeing an opening date. Anyone interested in joining the club, please call the office for more details.

Support Centre Activities

Over the last few months, we have been listening to your feedback. One thing that nearly all clubs requested was access to some of the facilities provided by the Vision Support Centres.

So far, we have provided sessions in Coleshill, Shipston and Kenilworth and have more sessions planned going forwards. Each session comprises an introduction to some of the most popular and useful equipment as well as informal chats about the range of services we offer. At some venues, we have also provided Magnifier sessions and an introduction to IT4U for those interested in bridging the digital divide.

If you would like us to present a session at your club, please discuss with your club leader who can contact us to make arrangements.

Team Update

I am very pleased to tell you that we are now fully staffed and that by the time you receive the magazine, we hope to have appointed our new Senior Vision Support Officer – drawn from within our existing team.

This will mean that we have a Senior Rehabilitation Officer responsible for our rehab services and a Senior Vision Support Officer responsible for our Community Services. This new structure should enable us to be more efficient, improve our communication and help us to be more responsive to your needs.

GDPR Update

I am sure you are fed up with hearing about the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) – we have had to reassess all our systems over the last few months to make sure that we fully comply with the regulations and to make sure we are protecting your data and ensuring that we have the appropriate consents to process it.

In the last few months, there has been a great deal of additional guidance provided by the Information Commissioner’s Office about GDPR. Initially, we were advised that we would not be able to send you any information in a mailshot without your explicit consent. It seems that these rules have now been relaxed meaning that we could send you information about eye health services (eg Support Centre Programmes) based on our ‘legitimate interest’ to inform you about things of benefit to you. However, since we started by asking you for your consent, we will continue to respect your wishes. Please remember, you can add or remove your consent to receive any of our publications at any time in the future. Just give WVS a call on 01926 411331 and we will make any necessary changes.

Database Update

Over the coming months, we will be introducing a new database. This will help us to work more efficiently and effectively to meet your needs by cutting down the amount of duplication, note writing and filing. We want to be able to concentrate our time on supporting you.

## Strategy

Richard Orme, Vice-Chairman

Last year we conducted a strategic review, when we listened to members and service users, staff and volunteers, and we looked at what other local charities in the sight loss sector were doing. The effects of this review are already evident.

Our Board now includes more people with personal experience of visual impairment. We are working in partnership with more organisations to ensure people in Warwickshire have better access to services. And our staff structure has been changed to be more efficient and operate without requiring day-to-day involvement from the Trustees.

In June the Board met to work on the next 3-year plan for the charity. The findings of our review will again be used when drawing up the new plans. So we will be exploring how to include more blind and partially sighted people in our organisation at all levels, work better with other organisations, raise the profile of the charity and reach more people who don’t currently make use of our services.

## My Sight Update

Christine Gill

Community Support Officer

After the success of the My Sight group at Nuneaton we contacted service users in the North of the county and ran a similar group at Atherstone through the month of May. Participants have found the group very informative and have enjoyed not only gaining new information, but also sharing their own experiences with each other.

We will be running a ‘Pop Up’ My Sight group at Coleshill Club during the summer. Anyone who would be interested in attending this one off session and would like more information, please contact me, Chris Gill, at the office on 01926 411331.

Here are the experiences of two of the participants at the Nuneaton My Sight group - Joan Bosworth and her son David.

## Joan’s Story

Joan Bosworth

My Sight, Nuneaton

My story begins in March 2017 when I had to have a cataract removed. My sight was deteriorating and I thought this operation would help my sight improve. The following month when I visited hospital for a check-up I was diagnosed with AMD and registered as partially sighted. I do have other health conditions as well, and as you can imagine, the diagnosis really upset me and slowly my eyesight has continued to deteriorate.

I decided to get support from Warwickshire Vision Support Centre in Nuneaton. The first time I visited the centre I was very nervous and found it difficult to walk through the door. My son David was with me and with his encouragement I managed to walk into the room. I was met by Christine who welcomed me and introduced me to the group. It was through the Support Centre that I heard about the My Sight group.

At the time the My Sight group was run by John Davis and Christine. John was very helpful and explained a lot of things which I didn’t understand. In particular he helped me understand the visual hallucinations I was experiencing known as Charles Bonnet Syndrome. I often saw the figure of a man who was dressed in a sou’wester, sometimes I saw a boy. At first I thought ‘How has he got here?’ Now as I look through a window at night-time I often see trees where there aren’t any and sometimes when I’m looking at the TV I see chicken wire all over it. My Sight helped me not only understand my eye condition but I also learnt about what other people were experiencing.

A few months ago (January 2018), while sitting close to my son Kevin, I realised I could no longer see his face clearly; it was a blur. This upset me greatly to think that I wouldn’t see his or my other son David’s face again. I spent hours sobbing, and still find it difficult to accept. I have managed to come to terms with having Parkinson’s (that I was diagnosed with not long ago) but I have still not been able to accept the loss of my sight.

I would say to anyone with sight loss, it is worth going to the My Sight group because you learn a lot about all sorts of things. I have had help with magnifiers, learnt about equipment and lighting and I now have Talking Newspapers and I really enjoy listening to romance books on the boom box that Warwickshire Vision Support provided for me.

The support group has given me help and encouragement to try and continue my life as normally as possible, it helps me socialise with other people and help is always there if things change.

Editor

A visual hallucination is the same experience as really seeing something, but the ‘something’ is not actually there. These hallucinations come and go unannounced and can last for just a few seconds or as long as a day or more.

Charles Bonnet Syndrome can last from days to years. For most people the hallucinations do eventually disappear.

A Macular Society pamphlet ‘Visual Hallucinations’ provides information on eye exercises and movements that can help lessen the impact and length of hallucinations.

Macular Society - 01264 350 551

www.macularsociety.org

## David’s Story

David Bosworth

My Sight Group, Nuneaton

Mum enjoyed going to the My Sight group, she found it very interesting and helpful, not only with the information she was given, but also with the way that the staff enabled her to try out equipment and for the equipment to be explained to her.

When we did the session on eye conditions it was a real wake-up call for me. We had the opportunity to try out sim specs, which give an idea of how someone with certain eye conditions, who is losing their sight, might be seeing the world. To actually see what they’re seeing really has made me more aware now of how Mum struggles with her sight loss every day.

The feeling when I wore these glasses actually brought me to tears. Not to be able to see something 6 inches away from my face was mind blowing and soul destroying. And to think this was happening to my own Mum - it just made me more aware of her condition and how much help she needs day to day.

When I went along with Mum to My Sight I didn’t realise how much I would get from it. The My Sight sessions enabled me to have a greater understanding of sight loss and help Mum with the support she needs.

Editor

Simulation Spectacles are designed to simulate the effects of the most common causes of visual impairment. As the visual effects of eye conditions vary widely between individuals, it is only possible to produce spectacles that simulate ‘typical’ effects and acuity losses associated with the conditions. The Optima sim specs that WVS uses simulate:

* Cataracts and Low Acuity
* Macular Degeneration
* Tunnel Vision
* Tunnel Vision and Low Acuity
* Hemianopia
* Diabetic Eye Disease

## Tina Jackson

Nuneaton

I am Tina Jackson, married and have one son. I enjoy volunteering so much that I now volunteer for five charities. One of them is Warwickshire Vision Support. I go along to the Support Centre at Newtown Community Centre every Thursday morning and in September I will have been a volunteer with them for 4 years. I help to set up, make drinks and talk to the service users.

Earlier this year I applied to join St John Ambulance as a First Aider. In February I did my interview then in March I trained. Assessments were in April and I’m so pleased I passed. I am trained in CPR (Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation) and I can use AED (Defibrillator). Hopefully I will be on duty with St John Ambulance at the Bramcote Station Open day in July.

I have also had Safeguarding, People Moving and Working With People who Challenge training with WVS and My Guide with Guide Dogs (this means I am qualified to support visually impaired people when they are walking out and about).

The Nuneaton Social Club is being revived and I am helping set it up at the moment. I hope that the club will be a place where people who are visually impaired will be able to socialise together. We will have trips to different places, talks, music and varied activities.

Editor

Congratulations to Tina on her important first aid skills, it’s good to know that she has them.

If anyone is interested in joining the Nuneaton Club, either as a member or as a volunteer, please do call the office and ask for Christine Gill who will be more than happy to have a chat with you: 01926 411331

## Open Forum Report

Stratford upon Avon, 10th April

This Forum was attended by over 40 people – members and volunteers, together with staff and trustees, including Jeff Perry, Chairman and Phil Arkell, Chief Executive Officer.

Coffee, tea and biscuits were served prior to the meeting, giving everyone the chance to mingle, chat and ask questions informally.

Jeff Perry then opened the meeting by introducing the trustees and staff members.

Phil Arkell spoke about what had been happening at WVS.

Staff

Six team members had left in the last 12 months but we are fortunate to have excellent replacements and we are now fully staffed. He spoke about the new members of staff, welcomed back Vicky Lewis who has just returned from maternity leave and thanked Sue Morris, who has been a stabilising influence during this period.

GDPR

The law coming into effect on 25th May 2018 governing Data Protection means that there are more stringent safeguards on your personal data and we need to seek consent to contact you. Anyone wanting to continue receiving mailings from us to keep up to date with what is happening at WVS will need to fill out and sign a consent form so that we can continue to hold their address details. The letters had been sent out but forms were also available at the meeting. We would like to assure you that data held by WVS will not be shared with anyone else. We do hold the Register on behalf of the Local Authority and therefore that data would have to be passed back to WCC if we lost the Service Contract.

Safeguarding

We have all heard about scandals with Saville, FA, Churches, Oxfam and more recently RNIB. As a responsible organisation we are revisiting all our policies and procedures to make sure that volunteers and team members are all protected.

Strategic Plan/Service Changes

The Strategy Review, completed last year, produced positive feedback and good ideas. The findings are now being looked at in our drive for continuous improvement. Some of the main areas being considered are:

* Services to remote locations and isolated/minority communities
* Promoting service user participation in volunteering and governance
* Putting more support into our clubs and Home Visitor Service
* Being able to offer advice to help improve the economic wellbeing of service users
* Advocacy
* Support for our volunteers from a dedicated staff member
* Improving our profile so that people understand that we are a charity, also making sure we become better known within Warwickshire

Investing in our Volunteers

WVS services are only possible thanks to our 270 volunteers, and we are extremely grateful for the time and effort that they give to us. Clubs, Home Visitors, Warwickshire Vision magazine, Support Centres are all dependent upon our volunteers. In total they contributed 20,600 hours last year, time that would cost us £250,000 if we had to pay for it.

We are now investing in new training and induction for volunteers and hope that this and the increased level of support will enable us to continue to recruit.

Local services for South Warwickshire

We now have an Advice Desk at the new eye clinic at Stratford Hospital. We are working with Shakespeare Lions who have a display cabinet of our demo equipment there. We are planning to offer Support Centre activities at more remote clubs including equipment, magnifiers and IT.

To help recover some of our costs, we are now making a charge of £1 for refreshments at Support Centres. Just running Stratford Centre for one session costs £200.

WVS is a Charity

The Rehab contract with Warwickshire County Council accounts for 40 percent of income; the other 60 percent - £245,000 per year - needs to be raised. Some of our main outgoings are

* Vision Support Centres £50K
* Advice Desk £40K
* Home Visitors £31K
* IT4U £36K
* Clubs £41K
* My Sight £42K

What can you do to help?

Donations are always gratefully received, as are legacies. Friends or relatives may be able to help by collecting sponsorship for sporting events/challenges or by suggesting WVS when a charity of the year is being selected, at work, the golf club, Rotary, Lions, Round Table or any other local club or society. People willing to collect for us are also very welcome.

Questions on a range of subjects were addressed to the Board members and to Phil. Members also had the opportunity to ask the Trustees more questions.

## Open Forum-15th  October 2018

Leamington Support Centre Chandos Court, Chandos Street, Leamington CV32 5YU

10.00 am-12.30 pm

Please join us at our Open Forum.

We will make a short presentation on our achievements, challenges and plans and then open the floor to you, our members, to share your thoughts and ideas.

Everyone is welcome. If you live in the Leamington area you should receive a reminder nearer the time. If you would like any more information phone the WVS office on 01926 411331

# Health and Wellbeing

## Health Information Week

2nd - 8th July 2018

Stratford Hospital is to play host to various organisations during Health Information Week. Displays of information, activities and resources will be available.

Organisations already booked are:

Monday

* The Samaritans
* Stratford Lions with a display of visual aids

Tuesday

* Café Lomas - Activity and Health session
* WVS support centre will be open in Rother Street

Wednesday

* Springfield Mind
* P3 promoting independence for people 25+
* Stratford Library

Thursday

* Stratford Lions with a display of visual aids
* WVS Information and Advice stand
* Café Lomas – various support groups (to be confirmed)
* Library services

Friday

* Victim Support for people affected by crime
* Stratford Library

## Falls

Paul Hinksman, Leamington

About one in three adults over 65 who are living at home have at least one fall a year. Although most falls don’t cause serious injury, there is a risk that a fall can lead to broken bones and can also affect a person’s confidence and sense of independence. People with a long-term health condition are more vulnerable. The effects of medication such as blood pressure-lowering pills can contribute to a greater risk of a fall.

Apart from health issues a fall is more likely to happen when

* The floor is wet or recently polished
* Lighting is dim
* Rugs or carpets aren’t properly secured
* The person is reaching out or going downstairs
* The person is rushing to get to the bathroom
* The person stands up too quickly from a hot bath or a warm bed
* They are wearing ill-fitting slippers

What to do if you have a fall

* If you have a fall try to stay calm
* If you’re not hurt and you feel strong enough to do so, get up carefully. Roll onto your hands and knees and try to find a stable piece of furniture to hold onto. When you feel ready, slowly get up. Then you should sit down and rest before carrying on
* If you are hurt and can’t get up, try to get somebody’s attention by calling for help or banging on the floor or wall. If you have an aid call button use that or, if you can, crawl to a telephone and dial 999 for an ambulance
* If you are able, put something warm around you like a blanket or dressing gown. Try to stay comfortable and change your position every half hour or so.

If you have a visual impairment, bright and adjustable lights can help to avoid accidents in the home. The way your home is painted can also make it easier to find your way around. For example, using contrasting paint can make it easier to tell the difference between nearby objects such as doors and their handles. On a more technical level, a global positioning system (GPS) is a navigational aid which, when programmed, can tell you your current position and give you directions to where you want to go. Other things which you can do in the home to help avoid falls are the use of non-slip mats in the bathroom, making sure spills are mopped up and checking that clutter is removed.

Fortunately most people will not sustain a serious injury as a result of a fall but it is always important to do anything that will minimise the risk.

## Are You a Diabetic?

Just because you have not been diagnosed with the condition does not mean that you have not got it. You may not have the generally recognized symptoms such as having to urinate quite frequently, being tired all the time, losing weight without trying to, blurred vision or itching. And of course, having a close relative with the condition can indicate a predisposition. However, being overweight is a big factor.

If you have been diagnosed with type-2 diabetes there is a lot you can do to help yourself.

Michael Butcher who is in his early fifties and runs a small farm and a brewery, visited his doctor where he had a routine patient screening. The screening included a blood test that revealed he was a diabetic. He was shocked, as only a few years earlier he had used a home blood test kit, and the result was normal. He was also aware of the symptoms, none of which he had experienced, or knew of anyone in his family with the condition. His doctor prescribed medication.

Michael’s weight had crept on over the years, mainly through eating high-carb snacks. Although his work kept him active, he was not having any cardio vascular exercise. His reaction to the diagnosis was to do some research on diabetes.

He found a study, by the Magnetic Resonance Centre at Newcastle University, which suggested a type-2 diabetes diagnosis could be reversed simply by following a punishing diet. Substantial amounts of fat should be eliminated from the liver, pancreas (and elsewhere), which should enable the body to start producing insulin normally again, especially for anyone who had only recently been diagnosed.

Michael followed the diet and started cycling fast for at least half an hour twice every day. He also bought a blood sugar monitor to measure his progress. For 4 months he followed an 800-calories a day diet which excluded alcohol, chocolate, carbs, meat, dairy and fish. He was allowed three meal replacement shakes and extra green leafy vegetables, washed down with 3 litres of water.

After the first few days the diet became bearable (although it had side effects), he felt full and surplus weight dropped off him. Three months later 4st 10lbs (of a surplus 6st 4lbs) had been lost and his blood sugar was down to normal. In the next month a further 1st 8lbs was lost.

All that was 1 year ago and Michael’s weight and blood sugar levels are now stable and at healthy levels. The diet and exercise regime were drastic but it worked for him. And he feels healthier.

He can’t be complacent and still watches his weight; if it increases towards more than 11lbs he increases his exercise level and decreases the dairy, meat and carbs that he eats.

*The information in this item is taken from an article in the Daily Telegraph with the headline ‘I reversed my midlife diabetes’.*

If you think you are at risk, don’t be an ostrich and put your head in the sand about finding out.

Diabetes can lead to heart and kidney failure, blindness and limb amputation.

If you have got type-2 diabetes, are you doing everything you can to help yourself?

Did you know that 10 per cent of the NHS annual budget is spent on diabetes at present?

## Some facts about Diabetes

If you are overweight, over 40 or have a family member with diabetes it could be a good idea to have a blood test. For the most accurate check on your blood sugar levels go to your GP. The test will measure gylcated haemoglobin (HbAlc) by taking a pinprick test.

There are home-testing kits available from pharmacies. They contain a lancet with which to prick your finger. Then put a drop of blood on a test strip and place the strip into a special measuring device called a glucose meter.

A normal blood sugar range is less than 6 per cent or 42mmol. For pre-diabetes, it’s between 6 and 6.4 per cent or 42-47mmol. The threshold for a diagnosis of diabetes is more than 6.4 per cent or 47mmol.

For more information go to nhs. uk/ tools/pages/diabetes.aspx

## The Sugar Tax

The Soft Drinks Industry Levy was introduced on 6th April 2018. The aim is to reduce the high level of sugar in soft drinks available for sale commercially in the UK. Manufacturers have had to reduce the level of sugar in their products or to increase the price. (Just one can or bottle of some fizzy drinks have contained the total daily recommended intake of sugar for an adult.)

This tax has been backed by doctors, campaigners and scientists to help prevent the 8,000 cases of type-2 diabetes in the UK that have been linked to sugary drinks.

Over-consumption of sugar can lead to an over-weight problem. Two-thirds of the population in this country is overweight and we are on our way to being the fattest country in Europe.

Children are frequently the target consumers of the manufacturers of foods with a high level of sugar, which means that there is a growing obesity problem. It can sometimes establish eating patterns for life.

This nation is 20 per cent less active than it was in the 1960s.

In Britain we eat more chocolate than is eaten in Europe.

Each year we now spend more on the treatment of obesity and diabetes than on the police, fire services and judiciary combined.

## AMD Research

It is thought that Age-related Macular Degeneration affects one in 40 people aged over 50, making it one of the most common forms of sight loss. Research using stem cells has taken place, but results on early tests were disappointing.

Tests were started on human embryonic stem cells. Although HESCs are better at turning into the desired tissue, they have a tendency to form tumours. Safety tests were initially carried out on mice and pigs, then the first two human patients.

HESCs were converted into retinal cells and arranged on a tiny membrane. This was injected under each patient’s retina (one of whom was 86 years old).

Those operations took place a year ago and now both patients have regained the ability read, albeit with spectacles and no tumours have developed.

This experiment took place through research carried out at Moorfields Eye Hospital and University College Hospital in London.

## My Arthritic Toe

Jackie Saich

Many years ago, I was given a leaflet on Dietary Guidance for Arthritis by a friend. As I didn’t have arthritis at the time, I put it away and forgot about it. But as I got older and started to feel the odd twinge in one of my feet, I remembered the leaflet and started to read it properly.

All types of food and beverages were graded from 0 to 200 and I remembered being told that should I develop arthritis in the future, it was recommended to avoid any foods graded over 100. This was quite a wake-up call, as a lot of these were foods I enjoyed and ate regularly. However, although very sceptical I thought I’d give it a try to see if the arthritis in my foot would respond.

With the emphasis on maintaining a balanced and healthy diet, I started with cutting down on certain foods rather than excluding them completely, and much to my surprise over a period of time I found that it worked. On a daily basis it wasn’t too bad, but if I ate certain foods my foot hurt more. The main recommendation was no red meat, including bacon, corned beef and ham, also cream and butter - basically no animal fats. Other high graded foods were cream cheeses, including brie (one of my favourites) and eggs, prawns, crab, mackerel and hake, although cod, haddock and salmon were fine. Surprisingly raw tomatoes were graded higher than cooked. All vegetables were fine except parsnips, but fruit was a hard category for me as all my favourites - plums, strawberries, raspberries and rhubarb - were graded high.

Other high graded foods included things made with white flour, bread, cakes, biscuits etc. Wholewheat flour was fine. With regard to drinks, all fruit juices were fine as were herb teas, drinking chocolate and decaffeinated coffee.

I now follow these recommendations and can onIy speak as I find. What has worked for me might not work for other sufferers, but over the years I’ve noticed that my arthritis has not got any worse, and what really convinced me is that when I do indulge in some of the ‘forbidden’ foods, I get more pain in my foot. The hardest time for me is the strawberry season. If I eat more than four or five, I pay the price!

## Foot Health

As we get older, it is important to implement good foot care to stay active. From around the age of 55 feet can naturally develop problems due to years of daily wear and tear, and because skin loses its elasticity and starts to become thin.

A good foot care regime will improve health and help prevent common problems.

* Keep toenails short, as nails that become too long can press against the end of shoes and cause soreness, and even infection and ulceration
* Check your feet regularly, daily if necessary, and moisturise (but not between the toes) to keep them supple and prevent nails from becoming brittle
* Keep feet warm by wearing socks or stockings. Avoid anything too tight that may restrict circulation or cramp toes
* Stay active and on the move, as this tones up muscles, helps to strengthen arches and stimulates blood circulation. Always choose well-fitting footwear.

Proper foot care is essential to healthy, painless feet, and should be as much a part of your daily routine as brushing your teeth. For good foot health

* Wash your feet every day in warm soapy water and dry thoroughly
* If your skin is dry, apply moisturising cream
* Trim your nails regularly; try to cut straight across and not too short
* Keep your feet warm, and exercise to improve circulation
* Visit a Chiropodist/Podiatrist for advice - you can take your shoes with you for specific advice on footwear

Exercises to keep your feet in peak condition

* Circle your toes ten times in each direction, keeping your legs as still as possible
* Consciously straighten your toes, then wiggle them around
* Raise, point and curl your toes for 5 seconds each, repeated ten times - this is particularly good for hammer toes.

## Don’t be Depressed

One person in every five in Britain suffers from depression. It is common in older people, and those who have memory problems, high blood pressure, high cholesterol or have had a stroke.

A study took place in the US, following nearly 1,000 people with an average age of 81 for more than 6 years - monitoring their diet and mood. People who avoided red meat, saturated fats and sugar and ate vegetables, fruit and whole grains were 11 per cent less likely to be suffering depression by the end of the study.

The study showed that participants who followed a diet close to the Dash plan, which recommends low-fat foods, were less likely to develop depression than those who followed a western diet that is higher in fat and sugar.

## Ten Amazing Eye Facts

1. Our iris is unique, just like a fingerprint.
2. The surface of the cornea is the quickest healing part of the body.
3. On average, we blink 13,662 times each day. Using a computer for 5 hours a day can reduce this to around 10,350, which may make your eyes feel dry and tired.
4. We produce over 1 litre of tears every year to keep our eyes lubricated. This doesn’t include the emotional tears we produce when we cry.
5. Your retina is one of the highest oxygen-consuming tissues in your body.
6. Our eyes are equivalent to a 74 mega pixel camera, but after our brains have processed the image, we can see at a level of detail equivalent to a 576 mega pixel camera, if one existed.
7. We have around 4.6 million colour photoreceptors in the eye called cones that enable us to see colour and detail, and over 92 million black and white photoreceptors called rods that help us see in low light.
8. The human eye can see at least 2.3 million colours. Some research suggests we can actually see up to 7 million!
9. About 8 per cent of all males are colour deficient and perceive colours slightly differently from the majority of us.
10. Your pupils dilate when you find a person attractive. Some studies suggest women’s pupils are widest during ovulation and this may be why men find partners with wide dilated pupils more attractive.

## National Eye Health Week

24th - 30th September 2018

Hospitals in Warwick, Stratford, Rugby and George Eliot in Nuneaton will be holding events to highlight National Eye Health Week.

All of our Advice and Information Desks will be staffed. Optometrists from the Hospitals have been invited to attend our Support Centre to give a talk.

We are still awaiting confirmation of details.

# Facts and Features

## My Story

Martyn Parker

My parents moved to Warwick in 1970, when I was three. We knew that there was a problem with my sight, but it wasn’t until I was seen at the Warneford Hospital in Leamington that they came up with any sort of diagnosis.

It was suggested that I be sent away to school, but my parents thought I was too young. I went to Westgate Infants School, and I coped pretty well, the teachers were really good and I moved on to Newbrough Junior. Unfortunately, I went into a class of 39, and despite her best efforts, our teacher could not devote the extra time I needed, and I fell behind.

In September 1975 I moved to Exhall Grange School in Coventry. Going to a boarding school was a big adventure for me, and they had started allowing pupils home at weekends, so I was not away from home for long periods.

At Exhall I managed to get much better qualifications than might have been the case if I’d stayed in mainstream education. I left Exhall in June 1986 with a couple of A-Levels, 8 O-Levels, and no real appreciation of how poor my sight actually was. Looking back, I was somewhat institutionalised, having been surrounded by people who knew and understood visual impairment, I wasn’t really prepared for the world ‘outside’.

It was around this time that I had my first proper diagnosis. On my records at school, I was always listed as having ‘opticatrophy’ which is really only a catch all term for retinal conditions. I had some genetic counselling through school and, in 1988, visited Birmingham Eye Hospital. I was told that my condition was called Lebers Amaurosis, that it is rare, and stable.

After school I got onto a BTEC Business and Finance Diploma course at Coventry Polytechnic (now Coventry University), and found myself in a group of fellow students who were willing to make some allowances and help me when needed. I was beginning to understand my situation a bit more, and in the summer of my first year, I approached what was then called Warwickshire Association for the Blind, and received my first mobility training, and my first long cane!

I joined Warwickshire County Council in March 1989, working in the Finance Team of the then Planning and Transport Department. I have worked there ever since.

In 1990 I ran the London Marathon, to raise funds for WAB, for this, I was made a life member.

I have always tried not to let my disability affect my life any more than it has to. I have travelled to Australia several times, both visiting relatives and sightseeing. For over 20 years I had a season ticket at Manchester United, travelling around Europe with the local Supporters Club branch. I also have family and friends around the country who I visit by train.

In the summer of 2013 I began to realise that my sight was getting worse. At the time, there was a guide dog puppy in training in our office, and one morning I was knocked down by a cyclist riding the wrong way along Barrack Street. When Guide Dogs held a ‘taster’ session for WCC Staff, I decided that I had to have a go.

The result of this was that I applied to Guide Dogs, went through the selection process, and was accepted. When they put me on the waiting list, I expected to wait a long time for a dog. I had only been on the waiting list for three days, however, when Guide Dogs called and asked me to try out a dog. The trial went well and the instructor asked me if I wanted him, and so Wheeler came into my life.

Wheeler and I have now been together for more than 4 years, and we are a well know sight around Warwick. He helps me avoid all the obstacles on the pavements, and find my way around; he is my guide, friend and companion.

On 22nd March this year, I arranged to meet my friend Ken at a curry house in Warwick. I was shocked and a little upset when he phoned to tell me that Wheeler was not welcome in the establishment. We explained that the restaurant was breaking the law by refusing to allow a guide dog in, but they were adamant and grew quite angry. We were forced to go to another restaurant for our curry, who were most welcoming and helpful, so we had a good evening.

I took to Facebook to let everyone know that this establishment would not allow guide dogs in, both to express my outrage and, hopefully, force them to change their policy. I also emailed the Leamington Courier, who ran the story with a front page picture of Wheeler and I, and it was also picked up by Daily Mail Online.

When I complained to the restaurant, I received an apology, they claimed it had all been a misunderstanding, and they had many customers who brought in their guide dogs. They said that they were aware of the law, and complied with it. To be honest, I wasn’t convinced. They also pointed out that the adverse publicity had affected the business.

Being refused entry to a restaurant because I need a guide dog was annoying, this was pure discrimination, and against the law. If I didn’t have Wheeler, I would have been welcome. I feel strongly that people should be made aware that, despite the Equality Act, discrimination still goes on.

This, of course, was not an isolated incident, it has happened to me before, and I am sure some of you reading this article have experienced it too. Prosecutions are rare, although I do know of some taxi drivers who have lost licences for refusing to allow guide dogs in their vehicles.

In my view, whenever this happens, it should be challenged; people providing services must know their obligations to provide their service to everyone, regardless of the need for assistance dogs. I understand that not all people have the confidence to challenge those who discriminate against them in this way, but writing complaint letters, using social media and reporting offenders to Guide Dogs, will help to make them understand.

In my case, there are other Indian restaurants in Warwick where Wheeler and I are welcome, so I’m voting with my feet and I’ll never go to that one again, and lots of my Facebook respondents have said they will boycott the place too.

## Pavement Hazards

Paul Hinksman, Leamington

Many of our pavements are becoming more and more congested by unnecessary obstructions. These can be hazardous for any pedestrian but particularly so for the elderly and for those whose sight makes it difficult to be aware of unexpected objects around them. Examples include cars parked on the pavement, advertising hoardings, bicycles either parked or being ridden and shop goods such as greengrocers’ produce. Wayward children and dogs can cause problems, as can people who stop suddenly, perhaps to use their mobile phone. All of these can not only be an inconvenience but also lead to injury such as a fall.

Although some of these hazards are sometimes unpredictable, others can be remedied by more thought from those responsible for them. What can be done to remedy this thoughtlessness? Objects like A-boards placed deliberately outside premises on a regular basis should be taken up with those responsible who should be politely informed of the dangers they represent and then asked to remove them. In the event of their failure to do so, you can ask your local council to intervene. If this has no effect you could take the matter up with your Member of Parliament. If you have been hurt, report it to the council with details of your injury but also consider informing the police and taking legal advice. Don’t feel that you are making a nuisance of yourself. Remember, even if you have not been hurt by the obstruction, you can prevent it from happening to other people.

The issue of pavement parking is not as clear as it might be. It is mentioned in the Highway Code but there is no national law forbidding it. In London there are council powers to issue parking tickets and fines. The 1835 Highways Act allows councils to limit or restrict pavement parking but many have chosen not to do so on an extensive basis because the process can take a long time and is difficult to administer. You may wish to encourage your local council to support the Guide Dogs campaign for legislation to reduce the problem. Sometimes it is necessary to block areas of pavement to enable work to be carried out but these will only be permitted by obtaining a licence. Obstructions such as unattended building materials or objects overhanging a road or a pavement are hazards that can be reported to the police.

Damage and disrepair to pavements are dangers to safety with the potential to cause trips and falls which in turn may cause injuries ranging from minor to serious. Victims of these are also subject to shock and loss of confidence. The local council has responsibility for the condition of the streets within their boundaries and should be informed of the hazard and any accident that has resulted from it.

All of this could sound daunting but accidents are relatively infrequent and being accompanied by someone, use of mobility aids and planning of trips may all reduce dangers, so don’t let these risks stop you from going out and enjoying your journeys!

## Scamming Crime

Age UK has carried out a survey of more than 1,300 people aged 65 plus across the UK which has revealed that 43 per cent of them think they have been targeted. Two thirds of the people targeted did not report it to an official channel and a fifth of the total did not tell anyone - because they were too embarrassed.

Scams include rogue traders, card fraud, vishing (phone fraud) and phishing (such as scam emails). Be vigilant and get up to speed on how to avoid scams.

July is Scams Awareness Month, organised by Citizens Advice and Trading Standards Services.

If you’re caught out by a phone scammer report it to Action Fraud, the National Fraud and Cyber Crime Reporting Centre on 0300 123 2040

For more information and advice visit Warwickshire County Council website: safeinwarwickshire.com

## Citizens Advice

Offers free, confidential, impartial and independent advice on Benefits, Debt, Housing, Employment, Family, Health, Consumer, Education, Tax, Law and Rights issues.

For more information:

In South Warwickshire contact 0300 330 1183 or visit cassouthwarwickshire.org.uk

Offices in Leamington Spa and Stratford-upon-Avon.

In Bedworth, Nuneaton or Rugby contact Brancab on 0300 330 1163 or www.brancab.org.uk

In North Warwickshire call 0300330 1193 or email advice@ nwcab.org.uk

In Coventry call 02476 223284 or visit www. coventrycitizensadvice. org. uk

## Voting

There are a variety of ways in which voting is accessible to VIPs. However, their vote is less secret than for sighted people, as there is at present no way in which a VIP can vote without assistance.

During Democracy Week 2nd - 8th July the RNIB, which campaigns nationally for VIPs, will be raising the issue of what they consider is inaccessible voting.

The aim is to provide an online and/or telephone option for blind and partially sighted people to vote without assistance and in secret. Electronic voting is used in other democracies.

## BT Basic could save you money

BT Basic is a low-cost telephone and internet service for people on specific means-tested benefits.

BT Basic costs

* Monthly telephone line rental £5.10 (inc VAT)
* BT Phone + Broadband £9.95 (inc VAT)

What is included:

* BT Basic
* Line Rental
* Up to £1.50 worth of calls
* Monthly price cap - once you have used your £1.50 call allowance, calls will be charged individually but up to a maximum of £10 per month
* Calls to 01, 02, 03 or 0845 and 0870 numbers plus UK mobiles starting with 07.

BT Basic + Broadband

* Line Rental plus all BT Basic services as above
* 12GB Internet Usage
* BT Virus Protect and BT Parental Controls
* BT Wi-fi, with access to over five million public wireless hotspots in the UK
* Free Connection

What is not included?

* Calls made through the operator
* Premium rate numbers
* Postage and Packaging for BT Router/Hub

Contract

* No contract and no cancellation fee
* BT requires 30 days notice to change to this service.

Eligibility

To be eligible for BT Basic telephone or internet you should be in receipt of one of the following means-tested benefits:

* Income Support
* Income-based Jobseeker’s Allowance
* Pensions Credit (Guaranteed Credit)
* Employment and Support Allowance (income related)
* Universal Credit (and are on zero earnings)

To find out if you are eligible for BT Basic, or for help to apply, call 0800 800 150 for more information. You will need to complete an application form, which is available in large print, audio (CD) or Braille.

## BT 195 Card

Rosalie Visick

This a Free Telephone Directory Enquiry Service for visually impaired and other disabled people who cannot read a Telephone Directory. I am registered blind and find it very useful if I want to contact a company or friend anywhere in the country.

When I dial 195 the telephone operator asks for my name and PIN number. She then gives me the telephone number I require and asks if she can put me through (at no additional cost).

If you need a BT 195 card, telephone 0800 5870195 for an application form.

## Know Your Rights under GDPR

Under the General Data Protection Regulation, you have the following data protection rights:

**Right to be informed**

Warwickshire Vision Support will strive to be transparent in how we collect and use personal data. This Privacy Notice sets out how we do that and is publicly available. We are happy to receive questions or comments about any information contained in this article.

**Right of access**

If we store your personal data, you have the right to make a subject access request. We are required by law to make this information available to you within a month, unless the request is complex or there are numerous requests. This information will be supplied to you electronically in a format that is accessible to you. This will be free of charge.

**Right to rectification**

If you become aware that we hold incorrect or incomplete information about you, you can contact us using the details at the end of this article to provide us with the correct information. We have a duty to keep up to date information and so we ask the contacts to confirm or update their information periodically.

**Right to erasure (otherwise known as the ‘right to be forgotten’)**

If you withdraw your consent and it is our only legal basis for keeping your information, your personal information will be deleted upon your request. If we no longer have a legitimate interest for keeping your data or the reason for keeping the information at the time you provided it is no longer applicable, we will delete your information upon request. There may however be situations where it is not possible, for example where we are required to by law. In these cases we will explain to you why it is not possible to fulfil your request completely, however we will work with you to minimise any processing of that data.

**Right to restrict processing**

At this request, we will continue to store your data but will restrict any further processing. Decisions to restrict will be based on assessing whether legitimate grounds override individual rights or not.

**Right to data portability**

You have the right to request that we move your data from one IT environment to another. This would be between different organisations. Whilst we will do our best to format our information in a way that another organisation could use it without it being corrupted, we cannot guarantee that systems will be readily compatible.

**Right to object**

You have the right to object to any direct marketing. WVS’ direct marketing is done through email and mailers which we seek your consent for. If you withdraw consent, we will cease this marketing immediately. You also have the right to object to processing based on legitimate interests or the performance of a task in the public interest, exercise of official authority, or for purposes of scientific/historical research and statistics. At this point we will consider the weight of the legitimate need to process data again the individual’s privacy rights.

**Rights regarding automated decision making and profiling**

This is not applicable as WVS does not currently automate decision making or carry out any profiling.

If you feel that we have not respected your privacy rights, you are entitled to make a complaint to the Information Commissioners Office (ICO). Further information on how to do this can be found on the ICO website: ico.org.uk/concerns/ However, before making a complaint direct to the ICO, we advise that you contact Warwickshire Vision Support first to try to resolve the matter in accordance with ICO’s guidance.

# Leisure

## Dippy is on Tour

A once in a lifetime tour

Sue, Nuneaton

The National History Museum’s famous Diplodocus, known as Dippy, is in Birmingham from 26th May to 9th September 2018.

Dippy has been displayed in London since 1905 and will be visiting eight locations in the UK.

Dippy is a replica dinosaur, cast from original fossil bones discovered in the US in 1898. The original bones are held in the Carnegie Museum Pittsburgh. The full skeleton cast in its displayed pose is an impressive 21.3 metres long, 4.3 metres wide and 4.25 metres high (approximately 70 feet by 14 feet by 14 feet).

Dippy on Tour is a free ticketed event.

If you have a visual impairment you can attend a special morning explorer event. There are two special dates where attendance will be limited to 75 people per session. Up to 200 people are admitted to all other dates and sessions. The special morning explorer sessions are on

Friday 27th July and Thursday 9th August at 9 am and 10 am

However, Rosie Barker from Birmingham Museum has said that if these dates are oversubscribed, other dates can be added.

Please arrive at the Gas Hall entrance 10 minutes before your allotted time. Each session lasts approximately 45 minutes; late-comers may not be admitted to booked slots.

The exhibition is in Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery’s Gas Hall in Edmund Street, Birmingham B3 3DH (round the corner from the main entrance in Chamberlain Square.

The nearest Birmingham train stations are New Street and Snow Hill.

There is parking for blue badge holders on Margaret Street and Edmund Street (close to Edmund Street lift entrance).

To order tickets for the special morning explorers events telephone 0121 348 8263

## RSC

The Royal Shakespeare Company in Stratford upon Avon is famous internationally and we are fortunate that it is convenient for us here in Warwickshire. During the season of each play’s performance at the Stratford theatres there are performances that are accessible to visually impaired people with live audio description provided.

At AD performances you can listen to someone describing what’s happening on stage, through a headset (in between the dialogue). You can also go on a Touch Tour beforehand to learn about the props, costumes and set. Audio notes describe the characters in the show, the plot, the look and feel of the show and any other directorial notes that are important. They are sent before the performance and repeated live just before the show starts.

Shakespeare’s Troilus and Cressida swear they will always be true to each other. But in the seventh year of the siege of Troy their innocence is tested and exposed to the savage corrupting influence of war, with tragic consequences. AD is provided at the performance on Saturday 10th November at 1.15 pm.

This new adaptation of A Christmas Carol by Charles Dickens is a festive tale of redemption and compassion. On one ghostly Christmas night cold-hearted businessman Ebenezer Scrooge learns to pity himself and to love his neighbour. There will be an AD performance on Saturday 19th January at 1.15 pm.

Tamburlaine by Christopher Marlowe will be at the Swan Theatre, with AD performances on Thursday 11th October at 7 pm and Saturday 17th November at 10.45 am. Tamburlaine is a poor shepherd who rises to power to live out his blood-soaked fantasy of conquering the world. His extravagant savagery shows what horror can result when unlimited political libido is let loose upon the world.

Tartuffe by Moliere has been relocated to present-day Birmingham. Tartuffe, Tahir Taufiq Arsuf, is a charismatic chameleon, a 21st century Rasputin equipped with a Twitter handle and the gift of the gab. This sparkling satire is set in the Pakistani Muslim community of Sparkhill. AD performances are on Saturday 24th November at 1.30 pm and Thursday 10th January at 7.30 pm.

Timon of Athens is Shakespeare’s most modern creation: a story of how the world moves from privilege to poverty with heartbreaking speed. Timon is a celebrated member of the establishment, whose exploitation by false friends forces us to gaze into the cravings we all share. This sharp satire on wealth, greed and betrayal will have AD on Friday 1st February at 7.30 pm and Saturday 16th February at 11.15 am.

Touch Tours take place 2¼ hours before each Audio Described performance. They offer the opportunity to get close to the set, costumes and props used in the play. During a tour backstage, the Audio Describers will guide you through important props and character costumes used in the production. Touch Tours are free but have to be booked.

There are four front row seats available at every performance in the Royal Shakespeare Theatre and Swan Theatre for people with either a visual or a hearing impairment. Please ask Box Office staff about the availability of these seats when booking your ticket.

Guide Dogs can be taken into the auditorium or left with a member of staff in the foyer, but please don’t forget to notify the Box Office when booking.

There are seven allocated parking bays for blue-badge users on Waterside directly outside the Royal Shakespeare Theatre and ten further bays on Chapel Lane, the road opposite the Swan Theatre. There are allocated blue-badge parking bays at the side and rear of The Other Place in Southern Lane. These are free of charge and do not have a time limit. There is a car drop off point directly outside the RST and a coach drop off point just past the Swan Theatre.

Tickets for productions in the Royal Shakespeare Theatre and Swan Theatre for disabled people are £16, whenever you visit or wherever you choose to sit. If you require the services of a companion their ticket will also be £16. Ticket prices at The Other Place vary but are discounted.

For more information and to book please call 01789 403436 Alternatively, you can book online using the access booking form at rsc. org.uk

## Why not Join Us?

Do you feel like some gentle exercise and meeting friends each week? If so why not join our Bowls Club for visually impaired people. If you’ve never bowled before we can teach you.

We meet every Friday from 9.30 am to 11.30 am at Avon Valley Indoor Bowls Club at Gaydon.

If interested, please contact Warwickshire Vision Support by telephone: 01926 411331 or e mail: enquiries@warwickshire.vision

## VocalEyes

VocalEyes describes itself as a nationwide Audio Description service for people with a visual impairment, providing access to the best in the arts.

Their services are mainly concentrated in London but include Birmingham, Oxford and Leicester.

In Portsmouth the Mary Rose Museum has regular ‘lights up’ mornings, when the usual low lighting levels are increased especially for VIPs.

In London AD is provided at a number of theatres including Shakespeare’s Globe and open air theatre in Regent’s Park. AD is also available at museums, galleries and heritage sites, such as Westminster Abbey and some exhibitions at the British Museum.

Open House London 2018 will be on the weekend of 22nd - 23rd September. Some of the buildings will have audio-described guided tours.

To have more details of VocalEyes and the events and places where it provides audio description telephone 020 7375 1043 or email enquiries@ vocaleyes.co.uk

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Views expressed in Warwickshire Vision are not necessarily those of the management of Warwickshire Vision Support

Warwickshire Vision is distributed FREE to all members of Warwickshire Vision Support

This publication is also available in digital audio, Braille and by email

For more information, please contact us

Tel: 01926 411331

Email: enquiries@warwickshire.vision

Website: www.warwickshire.vision

Warwickshire Vision Support is the operating name of Warwickshire Association for the Blind

A company limited by guarantee

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# Back page:

Your Local Vision Support Centre is there to help you with all your sight needs

Atherstone Vision Support Centre,

St Mary’s Church. Church Street, Atherstone CV9 1HH

Alternate Wednesdays, 10 am - 11.30 am

Leamington Vision Support Centre,

Chandos Court, Chandos Street, Leamington Spa CV32 4YU

Every Monday, 10 am - 12 noon

Nuneaton Vision Support Centre,

Newtown Community Centre, Newtown Road, Nuneaton CV11 4HG

Every Thursday, 10 am - 12 noon

Rugby Vision Support Centre,

Rugby Baptist Church, Regent Place, Rugby CV21 2AG

Every Wednesday, 10 am - 12 noon

Stratford-upon-Avon Vision Support Centre,

The Christadelphian Church, Rother Street, Stratford CV37 6LU

Every Tuesday, 10 am - 12 noon