

WARWICKSHIRE
VISION
MAGAZINE

SUMMER 2023

**MEET A
TRUSTEE**

*We catch up with
Richard Orme*

**READY TO GO
DIGITAL?**

*Landlines are changing:
Are you ready?*

**SPECTACULAR
STRATFORD-ON-AVON**

*Under the spotlight
this month*



WELCOME



Hello and welcome to this summer edition of the Warwickshire Vision Magazine.

I don't think there is a season that inspires song writers more than the summer.

I can easily recall many songs with summer in their title or lyrics, all of which convey a sense of positivity and freedom, and what better time of the year to feel that way.

It is the time of year when our gardens and green spaces grow and mature, when the gardeners amongst us can realise the benefits of their hard work through the spring.

I live on a very busy road but the back of my house opens to a lovely garden and beyond that, the

glorious Warwickshire countryside.

I experience the noise of traffic for large parts of the year, but in the summer months when I can open the back of the house late into the evenings, the sound of nature and local wildlife manages not just to penetrate, but to somehow

overcome the more industrial noises from the road.

My limited gardening skills do stretch to cutting the lawn and it is the time of year that we associate with the smell of freshly cut grass.

“The gardeners amongst us can realise the benefits of their hard work through the spring”

My neighbours would say they also associate it with the smell of freshly burnt sausages!

I do enjoy a BBQ, or more accurately, the excuse of a BBQ to meet up with friends and family, where my skills in burning food surpass my gardening abilities.

I enjoy the warmer weather but I most like the light of early mornings and long evenings which make the days stretch out one into another.

This presents us with more opportunity to get outside, to exercise or to simply take in the fresh air - very important to our health and well-being.

I certainly find this time of year uplifting, but I don't think I'll be tempted to start writing my own song anytime in the near future.



A view of my garden on a summer's day

I hope you all have a safe and enjoyable summer, perhaps finding the music within yourselves.

Keith

Keith Eales, Chief Executive

Do you have views on the services we provide or have ideas for new services?

We are looking for people to participate in a small number of discussion groups over the summer, aimed at helping us improve our services to you all.

Please get in touch with Keith at the office on 01926 411 331

THANK YOU!

Casceta McKnight, our longest serving employee, who many of you will recognise as the voice of the organisation and the first person you make contact with if you call us, is retiring on 20 July 2023.

Please join us in wishing Casceta a very long and happy retirement.

CONTENTS

Community News	4
Fundraising Focus	6
Bits & Bytes IT Update	7
Where in Warwickshire?	8
Meet a Trustee	10
Viva Volunteers!	12
Dealing with Glare	14

A Summer Poem by Marian Shalloe, Support Centre Volunteer

Welcome summer as nature has its big parade

enjoy the season of growth when all things bloom

take a break, have some fun, go outside,

allow your senses to come alive,

focus on the many gifts the summer brings

favourite things, the flutter of butterfly wings

laughter of children as they play,

the warmth of the sun on a summer's day

the smell of cut grass or a beautiful rose,

ice cream, cold drinks with ice cube clinks,

a sudden kindness that lifts your mood,

the texture and taste of your favourite food

picnics in the park, early mornings,

longer days and lazy hours before the dark

each beautiful sunrise and sunset

shady spots to sit on a hot afternoon,

listen, hear birds singing and buzzing bees

the sublime cooling breeze, the balmy nights

when the moon and stars shine bright

embrace all the lovely moments

and whatever summer means for you.

COMMUNITY NEWS

By Rebecca Bourton, Community Services Manager

Dedicated Fans

M meet Wendy Pope and her beautiful guide dog Lily, two of Coventry City Football Club's most dedicated fans.

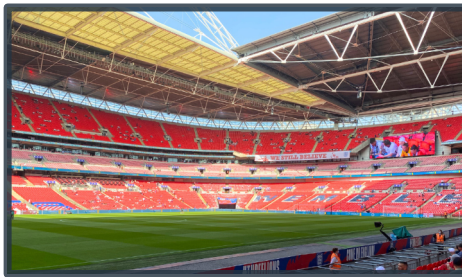
Knowing that Wendy is a season ticket holder, we wondered what the experience of going to a match is like for someone who is visually impaired.

Wendy attends the matches with her husband, who acts as her guide, as Lily now finds the crowds a little too much for her and has to be content with hearing all about the game when Wendy returns.

As it is difficult to see the play, Wendy listens to the match commentary on the radio in one ear and soaks up the atmosphere through the other.

Wendy can just about follow the direction of play and as she is familiar with her surroundings she can sense which end the action is taking place.

Although not asking for any special treatment, the fans are aware of Wendy's impairment which allows her to fully engage with the match and shout and encourage to her heart's content.



When asked about that semi-final trip to Wembley, Wendy said that as she was with Lily they were treated very well indeed and were not short of people offering support and refreshments during the match. As Coventry won it was an enjoyable day all round!

After matches, Wendy is guided home by her husband and win, lose or draw, Lily is always pleased to see them!

Wendy is proof that it is possible to enjoy activities that might be considered a

challenge to those with a visual impairment by not letting her disability affect her enjoyment of following her team.

Wendy was preparing to go to Wembley again to support Coventry in the play-off final this year when we caught up with her.

Disappointingly, Coventry failed in their bid to secure promotion to the Premier League, losing to Luton Town on penalties.

Nevertheless, you can rest assured that Wendy will be cheering them on all the way into next season...

Play up SKY BLUES!"

Bowled Over!

Margaret Cusker, who attends Rugby Support Centre, won 2 bronze medals at the World Blind Bowls Championships in Australia as part of England's VI Bowls Team

She won bronze in the B1 Ladies Singles and in B1 Mixed Pairs as England's team finished 4th playing teams from Scotland, Israel, South Africa, Australia, New Zealand, Hong Kong and Malaysia.



Margaret, who has been playing for over 25 years, said, "the conditions were quite testing as the temperature was 34 degrees most days. On one day there was rain and thunderstorms, but we still had to continue playing!"

Interestingly, their hotel in Tweed Heads straddles the border between Queensland and New South Wales, only one of which observes daylight saving, meaning the hotel had 2 time zones!

Well played Margaret and Team England!



Closer to home, 17 members of Rugby VIP Club recently participated in a bowling afternoon at Rugby Thornfield Indoor Bowling Club.

Club leader Kay Shaw told Warwickshire Vision, "The coaches were excellent and the team made us all feel very welcome, providing hot drinks and a private room where we could socialise after the bowling."

Thornfield has a coach who is qualified to teach bowls to the visually impaired.

Feedback from all attendees was extremely positive with several now wishing to join the club and others pleasantly surprised by how much they enjoyed themselves.

We'd like to say a huge "Thank you" to the club volunteers, Rotary Club drivers and the team at Thornfield.

Clock watching

Once on the mat, each VI player has a director who gives verbal direction as to where the jack is and where the bowls are. Directions are given using a clock face structure, with the jack being in the centre. Suppose the first bowl ends up at 2, then the next bowl might be best around 5, 6 or 7.

FUNDRAISING FOCUS

By Martyn Parker, Community Engagement and Fundraising Officer

Can you support our fundraising, so we can continue supporting visually impaired people across Warwickshire?

Here are some ways you can help to support our community work:

Individually:

- A one-off or regular donation, as many people kindly already do. Adding Gift Aid will boost the donation by 25%.
- Taking part in a sponsored event that benefits us - like **Pauline Parker** who's already walked 800+ miles this year!
- Consider leaving Warwickshire Vision a legacy gift in your will. We're currently looking for partner solicitors to help (let us know if you have any contacts with solicitors).

With Your Community Groups:

- Hold a coffee morning, sponsored walk, quiz, or other fundraising event. **Carol and Ron Ainsworth** (pictured) and their friends at Heathcote Park did this over the Coronation weekend.
- Invite us to speak about our work and how we can all help support visually impaired people in their everyday lives, as I recently did at **Stratford-on-Avon Rotary Club**.

At Your Workplace:

- Have a Warwickshire Vision collecting tin on your reception, counter or bar, like **The Castle Inn** in Warwick.
- Organise an event like a 'dress down day' with a collection for us - as our friends at **The Globe** in Warwick did.



- Sponsor an issue of this magazine (distributed to over 2,500 visually impaired people, their families and carers).

RECENT EVENTS:

We've had a busy few weeks, with a collection at Morrison's in Leamington, the Summer Fayre at Northgate Methodist Church, marshalling at the Two Castles 10K Run, and a Pub Quiz in Warwick!

HAPPENING SOON:

2nd September: Collection Day at Waitrose Supermarket in Kenilworth.

10th September: Kenilworth Half Marathon

We have some entries for this race, so if you are (or you know) a runner who might consider running for us, let us know!

Have you got fundraising ideas?
Organising an event? Give me
(Martyn) a call on 01926 411 331!

LANDLINES ARE GOING DIGITAL

By December 2025 the phone companies aim to have replaced the old copper-based infrastructure for home telephone and broadband with new digital (fibre) infrastructure.

Telephone calls will be made digitally using Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) and a modem/router will be installed to give access to the digital network.

Even if you don't currently have broadband, your provider will need to install one to allow VoIP calls.

You will not be charged extra unless you want extra services. You will also not need a new landline phone as phone calls will automatically work over the new infrastructure in the current way.

There are some things you need to be aware of, and discuss with your telephone provider before changing to a digital line:

- 1** The modem/router needs power, so without a battery backup or mobile phone, emergency calls can't be made in a power cut.
- 2** If you're dependant on your landline (e.g. you don't have a mobile, or have poor mobile signal at home), your provider must offer a back-up solution for you.
- 3** Certain devices such as care alarms or security alarms that connect to your landline may need to be checked, replaced or reconfigured.
- 4** If you have a disability or any other needs that mean you need extra help with the installation, be sure to mention it.

Many homes already use digital (fibre) infrastructure for broadband. If you're changing your broadband service you may get a better deal by picking full-fibre, the latest digital technology for a better service.

You may be asked about the things above, I was, and now you'll understand why. For more information get in touch with me (Ruth Okey) on 01926 411 331 or email me at ruth.okey@warwickshire.vision.



By Ruth Okey,
Technology Officer



Talking Newspaper

Talking Newspaper from the British Wireless for the Blind Fund has added more Warwickshire local news services.

They are available within the smart app or via Alexa and Google smart speakers.

There are now talking newspapers for Kenilworth, Warwick, Leamington, Stratford-on-Avon, Nuneaton and Bedworth, Rugby and Coventry as well as many other local services across the Midlands and the UK.

Remember:

If you want help with installing apps or using your smart device, just contact us and request an IT appointment at one of the weekly support centres (01926 411 331). We'll be happy to help you.

WHERE IN WARWICKSHIRE?

By Katherine Woodley, Vision Support Officer

In this edition we are focusing on **Stratford-on-Avon** and caught up with service user, **Petru Dragos** with the help of his interpreter and support worker, **Valerie**

What brought you to Stratford-on-Avon?

My son came here in 2016 and I followed him from Romania in 2017.

We worked at Bistro Pierre in the kitchen for just over a year, but due to my failing sight, I had to leave that job and my son returned to Romania.

I do not have any family here in Stratford-on-Avon but I have a sister in Romania and another in Germany.

Were you working in a restaurant in Romania?

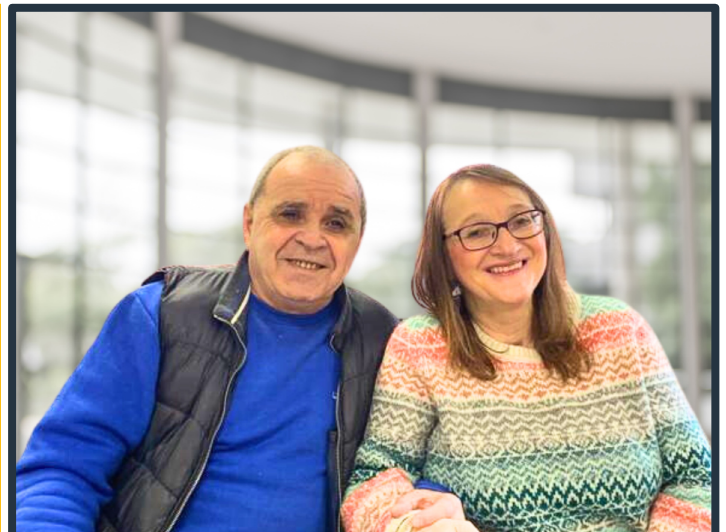
No, I was an electrical engineer in Romania. After losing my kitchen job, I fell on tough times and I became homeless.

I was then referred to Charnwood House, the sheltered housing provider through the charity P3. They gave me a home and introduced me to Valerie who speaks some Romanian.

I believe that God provided a home here for me in Stratford-on-Avon and Valerie as my support worker.

What does Stratford-on-Avon mean to you?

It is home. I prefer it to living in Romania.



Petru and Valerie

What is your favourite place in Stratford-on-Avon?

I love the town centre as it is familiar to me to find my way around and there is often music playing.

I love Shakespeare and I have incredibly good friends and support here.

As someone with sight loss, what services are there for you in Stratford-on-Avon?

I enjoy coming to the Vision Support Centre. I also have the local hospital nearby, Charnwood House and my support from Valerie.

A river walk in Stratford-on-Avon

By Martin Brookes
(visits Stratford-on-Avon Support Centre)

On a hot afternoon the writer was moved to write
Of his walk, and portray each and every sight.
The distance is not long and the going not hard.
Let's start at the Gower Monument by Cox's Yard.

First the Basin, the canal boats all in a row
Even notice the flowers that make a great show.
The curved footbridge crossing over the lock
A place to which many seem always to flock.

A busker or group may serenade you
As on the tramway bridge you take in the view.
Now, once traversed, you reach the expanse
of the 'Rec'
The 'View' menu you'll perhaps like to check.

Onward or around the Bandstand you then go
To reach the river and all that's on show.
But first let me rant about the 'Wheel'
Why, oh why?
Not needed I feel.

Canal boats, rowing boats, passenger ones too
Motor boats, big and small, all on view,
But don't forget the swans,
that do so please,
Lording it over the many
ducks and geese.



Did you know?

Stratford-on-Avon's population is just over 30,000 but it sees 2.8m visitors each year

Famous residents have included Gordon Ramsay, Arthur C Clarke and Dion Dublin

Our patron, Dame Judi Dench received Freedom of the Town in 2022

The ferry crosses the traffic at its own slow place
But it has earned its status with dignity and grace
Passing the large Colin P Witter lock
You come to those weirs, which you cannot knock.

This 'double act' of hypnotic cascading falls
Calms me so, until, onward progress calls.
Lucy's Mill bridge marks the halfway turn
With a boring bit upcoming you will learn.

Up to the path to the dull Mill Lane
No river in sight, oh what a pain!
Ah! There's Holy Trinity and its quiet graveyard.
Who's buried there, yes it's 'Bill the bard'

A rest break can be taken on benches supplied
To watch tourists on their river boat rides.
Step down from the church's peace and tranquillity
To Avonbank Gardens and the Memorial RST.

Walk past it's café on the open veranda
Unless to your thirst you need to pander.
The Bancroft Gardens is the last port of call
Where sustenance is available for one and all.

If you are lucky you may hear a band or singer
If good, I'm sure you will want to linger
Yet have I mentioned the one thing that's nice
I think I'll buy me a yummy choc ice.

So that was my greatly enjoyed river hike
Described in a format I so famously like!

MEET A TRUSTEE

By Maria Tongue, Volunteer Coordinator

Our Board of Trustees each bring different skills and experience to the charity. Today, we spend some time with one of them, **Richard Orme**

Hi, Richard, can you first tell us a bit about your background and what brings you to WVS?

I have worked in the disability field for 35 years and I was teaching at Warwickshire Agricultural College in the mid 80's when I encountered a blind student who needed to access his course materials.

I added a speech chip to a microcomputer and I typed out his course notes so he could access his materials and complete assignments independently.

So began my career in accessibility!

Since then I have worked for national and international organisations for software companies and now find myself as the Chief Executive of an international non-profit organisation focused on making books accessible for people with disabilities.

I'm privileged to work on big, international projects but I also believe it's important to keep one's feet on the ground and as such I have done community volunteering since I was a teenager.



I've had a home visiting role with RNIB since the 1990's and WVS gives me the opportunity to volunteer as a trustee.

How has your time with Warwickshire Vision Support been so far?

I've witnessed the Board of Trustees developing in a very positive way and we have the best group of individuals supporting the organisation at this present time.

The generous legacies we receive give us an important responsibility as trustees to ensure it is invested well for people in Warwickshire with sight loss.

“The generous legacies we receive give us an important responsibility as trustees to ensure it is invested well”

What have you achieved as a Trustee with WVS?

Being part of a team is a broader thing as it's about the achievements of the staff. I'm proud to have been part of the inclusion of more people with sight loss in the leadership of the organisation.

We now have young, middle aged and older people with sight loss involved with the organisation.

I feel strongly that a disability organisation should be as far as possible led by people with a disability and we are further down that road with this - but not there just yet.

I have also been part of building up the technology services that we offer as an organisation, but again, they aren't my achievements - the work is done by the team.

Are there any moments that particularly stand out for you?

We held a General Meeting in Leamington before the pandemic where we had a great talk with a diverse range of people with sight loss.

Listening to their priorities on what WVS should do, together with a strategic review, has given us a clear direction on how we develop as a charity.

I look forward to opportunities where we can continue to have this meaningful dialogue.

What's your vision for the future of supporting people with sight loss?

I have worked with local, national, international and speciality organisations and my vision is a sector that brings these parties together in a partnership of complementing services.

National organisations can't reach people in the same way - they don't know the bus routes, the local challenges and they can't do the personal visits.

That said, local organisations can't run services at a national scale, but they can facilitate access to those services.

My vision is for the sector to work in partnership across localised national specialist organisations.

How would you describe your time as a Trustee?

It has been a time of learning and I hope I've brought experiences from the outside into the charity for the benefit of our service users.

Could YOU be a trustee? We're recruiting!

Does one of these apply to you:

Visually impaired? HR/legal expertise? Experience in IT, marketing, fundraising, clinical/social care or commercial development?



If so, visit the Reach site at: <https://bit.ly/3SeABT6> - or scan this QR code

VIVA VOLUNTEERS!

By Maria Tongue, Volunteer Coordinator

Maria Tongue takes us through some of the recent activities focused on our wonderful volunteers



A Volunteer Fayre was held at Warwick Museum, just a stone's throw from our offices, wonderfully organised by our friends at CAVA (Community & Voluntary Action) Warwickshire.

It was the perfect chance to showcase our new banners and leaflets (which I am sure you agree look very smart).

The event was really busy and I met lots of interesting and hopefully prospective volunteers.

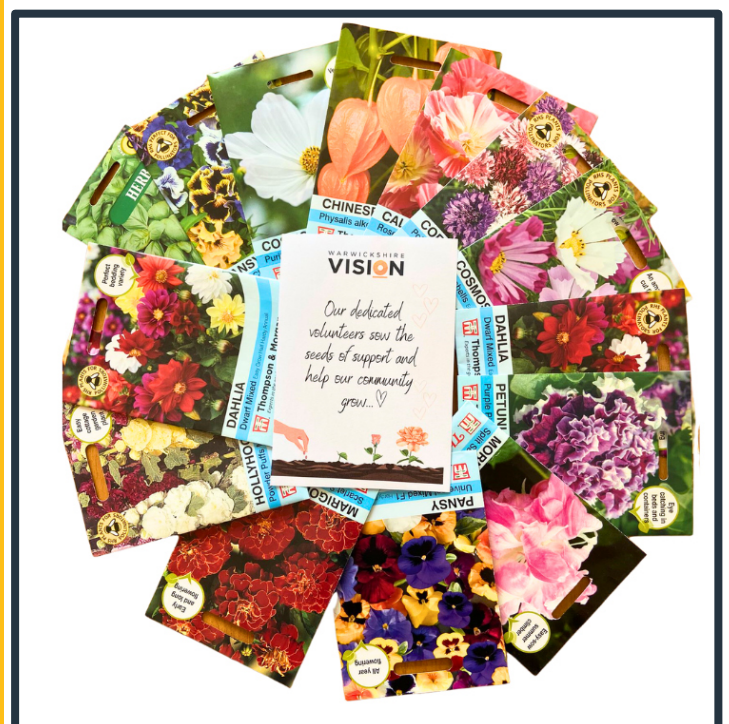
I'm looking forward to the next event and raising the profile of our great community work!

We celebrated Volunteers Week on 1-7 June, a chance to recognise the fantastic contribution our own volunteers make to our communities.

We arranged a few little surprises to say thank you, including meeting up for a coffee, cake and chat.

We also sent out some flower seeds to each volunteer as a special thank you to recognise the continued hard work and support they give, week in, week out.

It was a symbolic token of appreciation as the work they do really does sow the seeds of support in the community - all year round!



TRANSPORT SUPPORT



By Rebecca Bourton, Community Services Manager

The cost of living is increasing and many of us are feeling the pinch.

Warwickshire Vision don't want transport costs to be a barrier for people wanting to attend one of our 4 weekly and 7 monthly support centres.

Free local bus travel for many older people and concessionary travel for those below state pension age with a CVI (Certificate of Vision Impairment) is ideal for many who don't drive.

However, this is often not an option for those living rurally or without local bus services.

For others, declining mobility may prevent them using public transport if they need extra help.

We are in the fortunate position of having limited funding from the National Lottery Communities Fund to assist with the cost of travelling to our vision support centres.

To be eligible for transport to and from our vision support centres, you must receive one of the following means-tested benefits:

- Income Support
- Pension Credit
- Housing Benefit
- Council Tax Support
- Universal Credit
- Income-Related
- Income-Related Job Seeker's Allowance
- Employment and Support Allowance

To find out more information,
please contact Rebecca Bourton
on 01926 411 331



Vicky and Jane from the Rehab Team have been providing Sighted Guiding training to several of our volunteers.

We aim to offer this training to all volunteers, along with other courses which we hope will be useful.

We're working hard to make a range of interesting courses available to all volunteers so we can keep everyone up to date with changes, or simply as a refresher.

Courses are optional, relaxed and informative with no tests or trick questions - they're really beneficial.

If you have any suggestions for the types of courses we could provide please contact me.

We need volunteers across Warwickshire in a wide range of activities, including fundraising.

If you, or someone you know would be interested in volunteering, please contact Maria Tongue on 01926 411 331 or maria.tongue@warwickshire.vision

BRIGHT SUNNY DAYS & GLARE

By Andrew Baker, Rehabilitation Services Manager

Coming into the summer, our thoughts turn to lovely long, sunny days, ice creams... and glare

Glare is caused by light that is too bright, making it harder to see rather than easier.

It also happens when certain types of vision problems cause the light entering the eye to bounce around instead of coming to focus.

Glare also comes from reflective surfaces like windows, polished floors, metal objects, mirrors, and tiled floors and walls and it is a problem for many people with a visual impairment.

If you have a cataract, the increased light scatter within the eye reduces contrast of the image projected on the retina - a type of glare that is quite disabling.

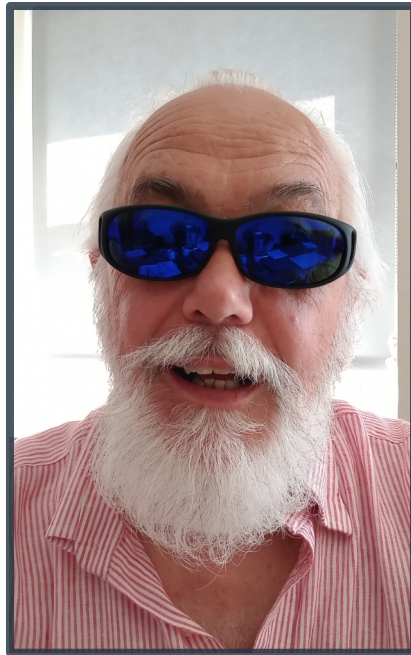
Although cataract surgery can potentially solve the problem, there are those with inoperable cataracts and those who are awaiting surgery who can also be helped.

Glare sensitivity has been shown to be an important factor in hindering the mobility of people with a macular disease and bright light scatter in the peripheral field can be painful.

So what can be done to manage glare?

Start simply - put on a wide brimmed hat or a cap with a peak.

Consider trying a pair of Polarised fit-over sunglasses like the **Cocoons Original** (available from us).



These polarised fit-overs have many unique design features:

Each frame has integrated brow and underside protection to eliminate reflected light from above and below, while the injected polycarbonate side shields block peripheral light without compromising the wearer's range of vision.

They look modern and stylish, designed to fit snugly, but comfortably over all styles of prescription glasses.

Not every visual problem is overcome with the above advice, but properly addressing glare can have a positive impact on an individual's visual performance and their ability to perform day-to-day tasks.

To learn more, call in to one our Vision Support Centres, or ask your Vision Rehabilitation Specialist, call 01926 411 331.

WHEN AND WHERE

Come and join us at one of our Support Centres!

We have guest speakers, equipment demos and they're a great social setting to build friendships and peer support.

We only charge £1 a session and provide tea, coffee and biscuits!

Our Clubs are a great way to socialise and make friendships too!

Please contact Rebecca Bourton on 01926 411 331 for more details on any of the Support Centre or Clubs we provide.

Opens 5th July!

	Area	Location	Date	Time
Weekly Centres	Leamington Spa	Chandos Court, Chandos St, CV32 4YU	Every Monday	9:30 to 11:30am
	Stratford-on-Avon	Samaritans Community Hub, Tyler House, CV37 6TY	Every Tuesday	9:30 to 11:30am
	Rugby	Rugby Baptist Church, Regent Place, CV21 2PJ	Every Wednesday	9:30 to 11:30am
	Nuneaton	Newtown Community Centre, Newtown Rd, CV11 4HG	Every Thursday	9:30 to 11:30am
<i>* Except August</i>				
Monthly Centres	Southam	Graham Adams Centre, St James Rd, CV47 0LY	1 st Tuesday of month	2:00 to 4:00pm
	Bedworth	Ex-Servicemen's Club, Rye Piece Ringway, CV12 8JH	1 st Friday of month	9:30 to 11:30am
	Coleshill	Coleshill Community Centre, Temple Way, B46 1HH	2 nd Thursday of month*	2:30 to 4:30pm
	Kenilworth	Kenilworth Snr Citizens Club, Abbey End, CV8 1QJ	2 nd Friday of month	9:30 to 11:30am
	Alcester	Malt Mill Lane Community Centre, B49 5QR	3 rd Tuesday of month	1:30 to 3:30pm
	Atherstone	St Mary's Church Hall, Sheepy Road, CV9 1EX	3 rd Friday of month	9:30 to 11:30am
	Shipston-on-Stour	Stour Court, Old Road, CV36 4HE	4 th Tuesday of month	2:30 to 4:30pm

	Area	Date	Time
Our Clubs	Atherstone	Every other Wednesday	10:30am - 1:30pm
	Kenilworth	2 nd & 4 th Tuesday of mth	2pm - 4pm
	Leamington Spa	1 st & 3 rd Wednesday of mth	10am - 12pm
	Nuneaton	2 nd Tuesday of mth	2pm - 4pm
	Rugby Hillmorton	3 rd Monday of mth	7pm - 9pm
	Rugby (VIP)	2 nd Wednesday of mth	2pm - 4pm
	Southam	3 rd Wednesday of mth	2pm - 4pm
	Stratford-on-Avon	Every other Thursday	2pm - 4pm
	Coleshill	1 st Wednesday	2pm - 4pm

We're inviting readers of Warwick Vision Support magazine to:

Macular Disease Conference 2023

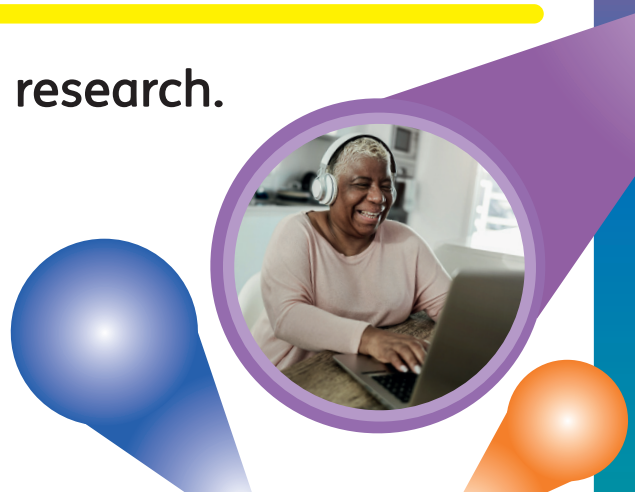
Hope for the Future

Expert speakers. The latest in research.
FREE to attend. 100% online.

Join us from 9.15am on Saturday
16 September:

- All you need on the day is a computer, tablet or smartphone
- Can't get online? You can also listen in on your telephone

Own your macular disease journey. Live the best life you can with sight loss. Register today for the Macular Disease Conference 2023 – you'll be so glad you did.



“Very informative and well explained – it gave me a lot of reassurance about my own condition. It was also interesting to learn about the progress of treatments.”
- 2022 attendee

For more information and to register your place, visit everywhereplus.com/wvs or call us on 01264 350 551

Together we will Beat Macular Disease.



Registered with
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Beating Macular Disease

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