

# VOLUNTEERING

Newsletter - March 2021



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**Jackie Murrall**  
**Volunteer**  
**Coordinator**

## Annual General Meeting

Like with so many things this last year, we had to change the way we do the AGM so we held it online via Zoom on Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2021 and it was good to see a number of volunteers there. As Jon Parsons, Chair of Trustees said, our approach has had to change this year but we remain determined to support our clients across the whole of the county. We are delighted to have recruited lots of new volunteers and many of our existing volunteers adapted their support for people and became telephone befrienders. There were a couple of really powerful videos showing how much the support is appreciated by our clients and the importance of that support being tailor made for the individual.

Of course all our trustees are volunteers too and we extend our thanks to all they do to support Sight Concern Worcestershire. Jon Parsons stepped down from his role as Chair and said that he was leaving the charity in good shape and in the safe hands of trustees, staff and volunteers. Caroline Wigley was duly elected as Chair supported by Hazel Shaw as Vice Chair, both new to the board and we extend them a very warm welcome.



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## Caroline Wigley—Chair of Trustees

We are delighted to welcome our new Chair to Sight Concern Worcestershire. Caroline was born in Northern Ireland. After graduating from Durham university with a law degree, she joined the NHS graduate management training scheme. Her career focused on HR management and general management. She became Chief Executive of Birmingham Women's Hospital from 2000 to 2005. Her final role was Director of Leadership for the West Midlands Strategic Health Authority before taking early retirement in 2012. She is currently a Non-Executive Director on the board of West Midlands Ambulance service. Her term of office finishes on 31st March 2021.



Caroline lives in Worcester and has three grown up children. Her interest in sight loss matters stem from her mother being blind from glaucoma, having a cousin who is blind from Retinitis Pigmentosa and a child with an underlying condition with an ocular manifestation. She herself has early stage macular disease and is keen to learn how she can maintain maximum independence before the disease progresses. She believes that her interest in sight loss coupled with her extensive skills at Board level enable her to take up this new role with enthusiasm.



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## Volunteers

We continue to welcome new volunteers to our team as telephone befrienders. In fact already this year eleven volunteers have joined us since the beginning of January. In the year since restrictions were placed on our activities we have set up around 120 telephone partnerships, most of which continue. Many of those volunteers may well become visiting befrienders to meet their partners at last, once that becomes possible. We are planning a short online training session for those volunteers so let Jackie know if you would be interested.

Whilst we have been unable to meet up in person we have been holding regular Zoom meetings to support volunteers and to introduce the new recruits to fellow volunteers and staff members. Our next Zoom meeting will take place on Wednesday 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021 at 11 am. All volunteers are welcome so please let me know if you would like to join us – call Jackie Murrall on 07507 830546 or email [j.murrall@sightconcern.co.uk](mailto:j.murrall@sightconcern.co.uk).

Are you on Facebook? Follow our new Facebook page “**Sight Concern Worcestershire—Support**” and help us out by telling as many people as possible about it! In addition to news and updates about sight loss and the charity we also have a closed group for people Living with Sight Loss and their supporters to exchange ideas, information, news and chat in a safe space!



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## Malvern Talking News Volunteers

Malvern Talking News recordings were suspended in March last year and we were delighted to relaunch it in January. We would like to thank the team of volunteer recorders who have had to get to grips with another way of recording audio files from home and have recruited a News Editor and the Technical Editor who get the fortnightly editions out to the public.

Listeners no longer need to register with us as they can access the recordings from our website, on Alexa or by calling a local rate number. We also have a team of readers who are calling clients at home to read them a news update so we are offering high tech and low tech versions of the local news! A huge thank you must go to those Malvern Talking News volunteers who have now taken a step back but who contributed so much over the years.

And we're already getting excellent feedback from the listeners. Here's what some of them have said -

"Thank you for advising me of the return of the Malvern Talking Newspaper. I listened to the 28th January edition using your website and was very pleased to hear the readers again."

"I would just like to say how much I enjoyed listening to your article on Eco Bricks in your last recording dated 13th Feb, and how relevant it was to a lot of your listeners. The recording quality is very good. It is so much more versatile allowing me to listen to it on my iPhone whilst free running my guide dog."



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