

Volunteer newsletter June 2021

Jackie Murrall – Volunteer Coordinator



Volunteers' Week takes place 1-7 June every year and it's a chance for us to celebrate and say thank you for the contribution our volunteers make. It goes without saying that volunteers have played a key role in our pandemic response so this year it is an even bigger THANK YOU. Despite facing their own challenges our volunteers have continued to support us as a charity and people with visual impairment and sight loss. We have missed seeing you all and hope that we can get together before too long. We are planning an event later in the year, if all goes well, allowing us to meet without restrictions.

Befriending Visits and Outings

With the easing of restrictions across England and as the country moves cautiously towards a return to a more normal way of life, at Sight Concern Worcestershire we hope to be able to resume setting up new face to face/visiting befriending partnerships before long. We expect that volunteer visits will be able to start again during the month of June. Thanks to everyone who has maintained contact with their befriended during the lockdowns and restrictions whilst unable to meet up in person.



RUN – WALK - CRAWL

During March and April our team of Sight Concern Worcestershire Wanderers (made up of 5 staff members and one of our volunteer telephone befrienders) took part in a virtual journey around 32 sight loss organisations across the country. They collectively clocked up over 1500 miles during the 6 week challenge and connected with team members from the other sight loss organisations on weekly Facebook live sessions. Picture shows Dave Norwood, volunteer befriender, sporting his medal and Run/Walk/Crawl T shirt.



Email addresses

Where possible we are sending communications out by email to save on costs of printing and postage and it is also an efficient way of keeping everybody up to date. We know that some of you may now have an email address that we are not aware of so if you have received this newsletter through the post but also have an email address, please could you call us at Sight Concern so we can update your record.



Dementia Friends sessions

Alzheimer's Society's Dementia Friends programme is the biggest ever initiative to change people's perceptions of dementia. It aims to transform the way the nation thinks, acts and talks about the condition. Dementia Friends is about learning more about dementia and the small ways you can help. The staff team and some of our volunteers recently attended a Dementia Friends session. Many of us know someone with dementia, friends, family or clients and it was helpful to help us understand what it's like to live with dementia and the actions you can take. If you would like to know more about becoming a Dementia Friend please see <https://www.dementiafriends.org.uk/register-digital-friend>

Sight Loss Awareness for volunteers

Several of our telephone befrienders attended a Sight Loss Awareness training session in May to prepare them for moving on to a visiting befriending role as the lockdown restrictions are lifted. Many of our clients wish to continue receiving telephone calls but we are aware that some people will need additional support to gain confidence to get out and about again in their local area. Many groups and activities are also starting up again and on occasion our clients may need support to access these. If you, or anyone you know would be interested in this role or any other volunteering activity with us, please get in touch.

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Getting to know our volunteers



In this issue we introduce you to Phil Shepherd – Technical Editor for Malvern Talking Newspaper. This new role was created when the recording of the Talking News had to be done differently due to the restrictions imposed at the outbreak of the pandemic.

“Having worked as an interviewer for the Lottery funded Rock Around the Hills project www.malvernrockarchive.org I was looking out for something to apply my technical ability to, having also run a small home recording

studio in the 1990s. Becoming Technical Editor for Malvern Talking News, has enabled it to move towards a magazine podcast style of presentation, and I’ve enjoyed becoming a link presenter, even creating music to open and close each edition. I look forward to further developing Malvern Talking News alongside our wonderful team of volunteer readers and the news editor Caroline.

I enjoy my leisure time cycling and will be returning in September to tackle the Cambrian Coast Sportif which takes riders from the seaside town of Aberdyfi, to Barmouth, Dolgellau and back down the spectacular Tallylyn Pass. I am interested in bird and wildlife and always keep my eyes peeled whilst riding through the local countryside. I also continue to play and perform in bands.”



The Independent Sight Societies

Would like to invite you, your family, friends, and carers to our ZOOM sessions. As volunteers you may find these not only interesting and beneficial for yourself, but also for your befriendeds so please do share the information.

Six independent local sight societies across the UK will be running sessions on various topics every **2nd** and **4th Thursday** of each month, at **10 AM**.

The first session of each month, named **Live Well**, will be focusing on how to make the most of your life after experiencing sight loss.

The second session of each month, named **Future Vision**, will be focusing on assistive technology, aids and adaptations that are useful for people living with sight loss.

Please come along and join us!

For further information and to receive the Zoom link, please contact your own local society: Sight Concern Worcestershire

info@sightconcern.co.uk or call 01905 723245

June's **Live Well** Session on the **10th at 10am** will be delivered by our very own Sight Loss Advisor Michelle Coyle who will be looking at exercise and staying fit, helping you to understand the major changes associated with ageing and inactivity, and how being physically active can help as we move forward out of lockdown.



Do you want to be the next viral video sensation?

Are you volunteering with us as a befriender, gardener, Talking Newspaper reader, office admin, speaker's assistant or anything else?

Sight Concern Worcestershire are developing a social media campaign where we would like to do video interviews with our Volunteers to talk about their experiences and what they do.

It is a great opportunity for us to get our message out to the world about the work that volunteers undertake as well as draw attention to the opportunities for volunteers available here at Sight Concern. We value our volunteers very highly and spotlighting the work that you do not only shows how valued you are to us but also how much our clients value the work that you do for them.

If you would like to be a part of this new project, simply get in touch with Jackie on 07507 830546 or email to j.murrall@sightconcern.co.uk