

Look Out!



Halifax Society for the Blind – Newsletter - Summer 2019

1ST June - Volunteer Week Event and Celebrating a new Service

Halifax Society for the Blind are excited to announce that we will be holding an event to celebrate volunteer week. The event is to celebrate our existing and new volunteers, but also to mark the official launch of our Volunteer-led Home Visiting Service, where we will be holding a balloon launch.

The event is on Saturday 1st June, between 11am to 1pm. We will run a tombola, raffle, bun stall, face painting, entertainment, refreshments and lots more to see and do.



Donations for our tombola or raffle will be gratefully received. If you would like to do some baking for our bun stall or make any other offers of help, please contact Faye on 01422 352383. If available, we'd love to see you there, so please pop along to show your support and have some fun.

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Technology is a Hit at HSB

Our recent Technology and You sessions have been popular with members. The first session was around information on how the service would work, and this was attended by 17 people. Since then, more than a dozen members have been at sessions shaped around what people need. There is now a small waiting list, which we manage, when things have run their course.

People have been given support and advice about using smartphones, computers and tablets to access the information to make things work for them. Some have learnt how to use the voice software, to just make calls or send texts on their mobiles, and store numbers. HSB, take a wide view about technology. We include radios, clocks, watches and even talking thermometers. Phones and computers are just part of what learning is available, and how to use it in your life.

Technology and you sessions are available for you to book – via HSB's office. They are held on the first Monday of each month. If there's a bank holiday, this event moves to the 2nd week of that month.

New: Tech and Chat Group

We want to hear from you if you'd like to attend our tech and chat peer group – on third Monday of every month from 1-3pm at HSB.

Easter at the Society

Halifax Society for the Blind celebrated Easter with an 'eggstravagant' (sorry!) Easter Raffle, with a whole host of tempting prizes and treats.

Tickets for the raffle were sold and raised £68, with all monies going to HSB. We like to thank to all prize donors, and everyone else who supported it.



In addition to this, every group member received a delicious chocolate Easter egg, which everyone said was Eggscellent! (sorry.. again!).



Percussion Workshop

Saturday 15th June 2019

10am to 11.15am

Halifax Society for the Blind

34 Clare Road, Halifax, HX1 2HX



Come along and make some noise whilst telling stories with sound.

Workshop facilitated by Mark Chillington

Coffee and Chat available for parents with a view to creating a family activity group

Workshop Places limited to 10.

For more details and to book a place

Please contact sue.mort@calderdale.gov.uk

Flat Green Bowling: Have a go Event - 9th August

With Summer in mind, we thought it was time for members to try a go at flat green bowling. We've linked up with the Pennine Bowling Club, in Brighouse. You may have tried this before, but flat green bowling is less tricky than its crown green cousin!

Anyone going to this free event will be provided with bowling shoes, and woods, so there's no need to worry about that. This joint event will be on Friday 9th August starting at 2pm in Wellholme Park in Brighouse, (HD6 4AF, free parking), behind the Swimming Baths. Please book through HSB and tell us if you might like transport from HSB, which will cost £4 return.

Pennine Bowling Club was set up by people with sight loss, and has run for over 25 years. They raised funds independently to create West Yorkshire's only flat green. Group members meet on Tuesdays. Further enquiries about taking part on a more regular basis, can be made to Rob Booth on 07530 092506.

Special Birthday Celebration!

HSB staff would like to wish Janine a very happy 50th Birthday.

Ten Pin Bowling – Have a Go 2!

We are organising a ten pin bowling event for anybody who wants to have a go. It doesn't matter whether you've done this before – we just want to have fun. We will have two lands. One for Children and Young People, and another for anybody 18 plus. This will happen on Tuesday 16th July, from 2pm, at Electric Bowl, on Commercial street, in Halifax. Please book via HSB's office, on 01422 352383.

HSB would like to sponsor a ten pin bowling team, to compete in the 2019/20 VI league starting in September. Contact HSB for details.

Our 2019 AGM

HSB's AGM will be held at the Square Chapel on Monday 12th August, starting at 6.15pm. Unlike previously, it is being held in central Halifax, so that people can travel independently. Tea and coffee will be served on arrival. The reason for change is that funds are better spent on a evening to acknowledge and celebrate the achievements of local people – either dealing with their own sight loss, as volunteers, or as professionals in the sector. Awards will be presented, and a buffet and entertainment should work for a great night. Please see the Autumn edition of Look Out!.

Expansion & the Future – by Pete Hoey, Chief Officer

As I write, Spring is just starting to turn into Summer now, and that's how it feels with HSB's programme of developing services, which are starting to bloom.



Not only are we launching a vital home visiting service: we will soon open a 5 days a week Equipment and Information Centre, and we will also increase our range of sight loss activities. All this is underpinned by a strong emphasis on volunteering. That's why our major event on 1st June requires support and celebration.

HSB's board are also reviewing our accommodation options, to identify an accessible base in the Town Centre.

Town Centre Planning Update

You may have heard about Calderdale Council winning hundreds of millions of pounds to invest in local roads and facilities, from Leeds City Region. Well, that's fine, but we've learnt that part of this plan is to introduce joint pedestrian and cycling areas on Commercial Street, Market Street, and Corn Market.

HSB, RNIB, Guide Dogs and Kirklees Visual Impairment Network met with senior planners in Mid May, and were promised full consultation, with tactile models of key proposals. If you would like to know more, or for a members group around this hazard-riddled proposal, please contact our office, as we are likely to need your support in the coming months.

Equipment and Information Centre

Over the coming months, HSB will open a full blown Equipment and Information Centre, for members to drop into, or receive one to one advice at appointments.

Once key staff roles have been appointed to. The E&I Centre will be open 5 days a week, from 10am till 2.30pm, and be a cornerstone of daily living support, sight advice and a gateway to technical help, and other services. Volunteers welcome.

Volunteer Training at HSB

We are pleased to announce that HSB's first training course for volunteers has taken place. The course was well attended with 7 volunteers present. Three of these current volunteers who already support at HSB in various ways and very kindly agreed to come along to the training.



As we develop the new structure of volunteering, we want to make sure that training and support are in place in order to maintain good standards of practice and build a reputation to be proud of.

The training covered things like Safeguarding, Confidentiality, Values and Attitudes and Working with Sight Loss. This training will be the standard training that all volunteers will have to attend.

Those attending said they had enjoyed themselves and the opportunity to get together with other members of HSB's volunteer team, as they will share the volunteering experience.

If you are interested in becoming a volunteer and would like to discuss this further, then please contact me at the office on Hx.352383.

Millstones – 2019 & Beyond

Despite fairly short notice, almost 40 members again visited Millstones of Harrogate, on Friday 5th April, for a lovely day of food, fun and memories.



Those who've attended before, as well as first-timers said they enjoyed themselves very much. A 2020 Winter Warmer trip has already been booked, so save the date – Friday 27th March, 2020!

Life Hacks: Metro Bus Passes

Thanks this time go to Barbara Sayer. Member's experiences suggest that while on breaks in Blackpool, Scarborough or even London, they encounter problems when trying to use their VI bus passes. Bus drivers challenge the West Yorkshire pass, and sometimes, try to remove them.

Barbara has found a neat work-around for this and wanted to pass it on to other members. She contacted West Yorkshire Metro, and learnt that anybody who is 65 or over can ask for the national travel pass, and this could be sent out straight away, as they already have records of VI passes.

This will avoid lots of embarrassing situations when using bus services outside West Yorkshire. All people need to do is call Kath at Metro, on 0113 251 7298 or email kathleen.lovatt@westyorks-ca.gov.uk.

Unfortunately, members who have yet reached retirement age can't do this, but HSB are working with WY Metro – who are trying to resolve this. If this has happened to you, please let us know, as Metro can draw on pass data, to identify how the problem is occurring. We will keep you updated on progress made.

Visit to Sight Village, Manchester

On Tuesday 1st Oct 2019, HSB will have a day trip to visit the Sight Village, Manchester. You'll be able to find out more about the latest technology, equipment and support services available to people who are blind or partially-sighted. If you or a family member have a visual impairment it could be of great help to visit the show. Transport will leave HSB's office at 9am, and return around 5pm at a cost of £10. As this is such a big event, with all the newest products, please be sure to book early for this fantastic event.

Living with Sight Loss Course – early September

More good news for HSB is on the way. As part of our commitment to provide a broader range of relevant services for local people with sight loss, we will be holding HSB's first ever *Living With Sight Loss* course in September, and are seeking course entrants now.

The course will introduce people with a recently diagnosed sight condition to the wide range helping services, gadgets and techniques available. Contact HSB's office to be placed on the list for this course.

LEO: A Passion for Eating Out!

Ten LEO members went to Café Passion in March, which shows how popular the choice was. On entering, we were greeted by the friendly staff. We all learnt why Cafe Passion is so highly rated on Trip Advisor. The Mediterranean menu is delicious, the food perfectly cooked, the portions generous, and the staff are lovely.



Café Passion is perfect for a group like ours or for an intimate meal for two. Well worth a visit.

The Catch – West Vale

April's LEO group headed out of Halifax to taste offerings from the Sea. The Catch, in West Vale, was on a main bus route, but beware of external steps around the building. Staff were found to be a little hard to engage people's sight loss needs, which was a little disappointing.

However, once safely inside, the dishes served were of sublime quality, ranging from a fab fish and chips, to a tasty Thai fish curry. Members concluded that if you've got sighted support, or know the place well, you'll really enjoy yourself.

The Potting Shed in Halifax

Meanwhile, back in Halifax, LEO's May visit to the recently opened Potting Shed found that staff were very eager to help, and the place was accessible, with a lift to all floors (via the Fire Pit entrance). With original food such as Haloumi kebabs, as well as many main-stays of high quality pub food. Uncomplicated and welcoming.

Future Local Eating Out Visits

Thursday 6th June, Romeo and Juliet's, 3 Horton Street, HX1 1HX. Italian/English Cuisine. Two steps at entrance.

<http://romeoandjulietrestaurant.co.uk/>

Thursday 11th July, The Stump Cross Inn, Godley Lane, HX3 7AY. Traditional pub food. Level access.

<http://www.stumpcrossinn.co.uk/>

Volunteer Opportunities at HSB

Volunteering at The Society is really starting to take shape and now is an ideal time to join the team. You may have read that the first training course has taken place, and we are holding a special event (see front cover). This is all very exciting and highlights the positive developments that are taking place.

You need no special powers to become a volunteer - all we ask is that you have good communication skills and a non-judgmental attitude. Induction training is offered and once you've completed this, provided two references and had a DBS check you can volunteer in whatever capacity you choose. You will have ongoing support throughout your time volunteering with us.



Volunteering is very rewarding. When you volunteer you develop your own skills and experience, meet people and build friendships. It's an opportunity to give something back to the community and improve your own mental health.

Currently volunteer positions that we have available are: Home Visiting, Social Centre Support, Resource Centre Support and Technology Support. This list is not exhaustive however, and if there are any suggestions or ideas you have then please contact me, Faye, at the office on Hx. 352383 or pop in to have a chat.

Activities Programme at HSB

One of the key staff appointments being made as we move into the Summer period is for an Activities Coordinator. This role will be instrumental for expanding the range and quality of sight loss events and activities that HSB operates; any visits we arrange, and the trips we organise.

Once appointed, the Activities Organiser will be very involved in drawing on what people have told us through the Future Focus Consultation, drawing on good practice in the Sector, and developing new ideas.

HSB welcomes suggestions from our community of members, volunteers, partners and supporters. We want discussions about our future activities, so get your thinking caps on and join in.

Be My Eyes Phone Application

Bringing sight to VI people, this app connects those with sight loss with sighted volunteers and company reps for visual assistance using live video calls.

How *Be My Eyes* Works

Every day, sighted volunteers use their eyes to solve tasks big and small to help people with sight loss manage independently.

Example 1: Blind or low-vision person requests assistance

As a blind or low-vision person, whenever you need visual assistance, our volunteers are happy to help. Through the live video call, you and a volunteer can communicate directly and solve a problem. The volunteer will help guide which direction to point your camera, what to focus on or when to turn on your torch.

Example 2: Sighted volunteer receives video call.

As a sighted volunteer you can help just by installing the Be My Eyes app. A blind or a low-vision user may need help with anything from checking expiry dates, distinguishing colours, reading instructions or navigating new surroundings.

Braille Passport Stickers

The Passport Office have listened to criticism over the Braille on passports. It used to just say 'Passport', but it now also says the persons name and the expiry date in Braille. When you renew, you can ask HM Passport Office to attach a Braille sticker to your new passport. To get a sticker like this for your current passport, call the Passport Line on 0300 222 0000.

Calderdale Small Works Grants

Calderdale Council's small works scheme helps people make changes to their homes, to promote and independence and safety. All approved works under £1,000 are non-means tested, but many people don't realise they can be used to improve the lighting in your kitchen to help you see what you are doing.



To start this conversation, all you need to do is contact Gateway to Care on 01422 357257, email gatewaytocare@calderdale.gov.uk, or drop into the Community Social Work Team, at 42 Market Street, Halifax.

Dates for your Diary

Sat 1st June, 1100 to 1300 – Volunteering & Home Visiting Launch, HSB

Mon 3rd June, from 1030 - Technology and You appointments, HSB

Thurs 6th June, at 1900 - LEO Group, Romeo and Juliet's, Halifax

Mon 10th June, at 1730 - Working Age Group, HSB

Tues 11th June, from 1800 - Trustee meeting, HSB

Sat 15th June, Percussion Workshop for Children & Young People, HSB

July 2019 - Volunteer Training course, contact Faye at HSB Office

Mon 1st July, from 1030, Technology and You appointments, HSB

Mon 8th July, at 1730 - Working Age Group, HSB

Thurs 11th July, at 1900, LEO Visit to The Stump Cross Inn, Halifax

Tues 16th July, at 1400, Ten Pin Bowling Have a Go, Electric Bowl, Hx

Mon 5th August, from 1030, Technology and You appointments, HSB

Thurs 8th August at 1900, LEO Visit TBA, contact HSB office

Fri 9th August, at 1400, Flat Green Bowling - Have a Go, Brighthouse

Mon 12th August, at 1815, Annual General Meeting, Square Chapel, Hx

Sept 2019 - Living With Sight Loss 2 day course, contact HSB Office

Mon 2nd Sept, from 1030, Technology and You appointments, HSB

Thurs 5th September, at 1900, LEO Group, TBA, Contact HSB Office

Mon 9th September, at 1730 - Working Age Group, HSB

Tues 10th September, at 1800, Trustee meeting, HSB

Tues 1st October, at 0900, Day trip to Manchester Sight Village

Fri 27th March 2020 from 0930, Day Trip to Millstones of Harrogate

About Our Newsletter

Look Out! is a quarterly newsletter of the Halifax Society for the Blind (HSB) – a charity registered in England and Wales (No 224258). All information provided by Look Out! at the time of publication is believed to be correct. Views offered, and statements made are not necessarily those of HSB's Board of Trustees.

We welcome contributions from both members and partner organisations, but ask that these do not exceed 300 words. HSB reserves the right to manage the content of Look Out!, in line with the special footprint of the newsletter, and its own policies. Look Out! will allow advertisements on a case by case basis, in line with the above restrictions.

Look Out! is distributed free of charge to any person with sight loss, or family member, or friend of somebody in the same situation. It is also sent to specialist eye services and will be made available on our Website. If you would like to obtain future editions of Look Out! or to let us know if you no longer wish to receive it, please contact us (see below). Anybody making a request to receive Look Out! in Braille or on audio memory stick should again contact our office, and we will record your preference.

How to Contact Halifax Society for the Blind

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Facebook **<https://www.facebook.com/SightlossCalderdale/>**

If you intend to visit our office, please note that HSB opening times are 10am to 4pm, Monday to Friday. For further information, please visit www.halifaxblindsociety.org.uk