

MySight York - Volunteering Extra (Winter 2020)

When I started to write this newsletter a couple of weeks ago I had written that I was now back in the office one day a week and working from home 3 days a week. However as you all know second lockdown has changed all that and I am back working hard at a desk in my daughter's bedroom (luckily she's back at university). I really enjoyed getting back into the office and hopefully it won't be too long before I am back there again. All staff are still working, albeit from home, so please get in touch, either via email or telephones (all staff have either their physical phone at home or a computer app and a fancy headset so we can still answer the phones from home!).

We are holding 2 Volunteer Christmas Parties this year, one via telephone and the other via zoom. To get us in the party mood there will be a competition for the best home-made Christmas Party hat (your description skills will be needed) and also the best joke. The parties will be on **Tuesday 15th December 2-3pm** via zoom and **Wednesday 16th December 2-3pm** via telephone. Please let me know if you would like to attend. I look forward to some wonderful jokes and party hats. As usual you are also welcome to attend our members party, details of which can be found in the main newsletter. It will be great to have as many of you join in with the festivities as possible.

Catherine Bamford, Volunteer Manager



Scott with a fancy headset and Catherine getting festive over zoom.

A message from Scott , MySight York's Chief Executive

To say that we have been stretched as an organisation since March 2020, is somewhat of an understatement. To say that we could have continued without your unwavering support, dedication and commitment, is an even bigger one.

The devotion you have shown to our work throughout the pandemic, will be remembered long after this virus has been banished. It has enabled us to continue assisting people to live well with sight loss, across the region.

And how so many of you, offered your time in other capacities, will also forever be remembered by the people needing it the most.

Whether you're a home visitor, fundraiser, befriender, home connections or activities supporter, the time you donate has never been more needed, necessary or relevant.

I don't know what the road ahead will look like but I do know that there are people with sight loss in York who need your support more than ever.

I'm certain the challenges will be bigger than any of us can predict, as we attempt to reach more blind and partially sighted people, with fewer resources and fewer ways to do it.

Donating your time, for me, is the kindest gift a person can give. Please

know that your time does not go unnoticed or unappreciated here at MySight York.

I know you have made a Herculean effort to support our members, especially since March, but I'm asking you to continue on this journey with us. To make a difference. To change lives.

Warmest thanks,

Scott, Chief Executive – MySight York

Home Visiting Service

In the last newsletter I wrote about getting the home visiting service back up and running. Unfortunately given the change in Government Guidance we had to make the difficult decision to suspend visits for the time being. We are continuing to review the situation and we will be back to doing face-to-face visits as soon as it is safe to do so and of course if volunteers and clients want to.

Fundraising, an update from Lizzy

As we find ourselves in Lockdown 2.0, Fundraising Volunteers are still as important as ever to support our Fundraising efforts. We still have positions available if you want to get involved! Please get in touch for more information.

I want to say a big thank you to all those who have been supporting us

during the past few months. Whether you have supported us financially, or by providing us with Fundraising ideas, it has all been very valuable and helps us do our work supporting people with sight loss.

From face-to-face to telephone

Like all charities we have had to adapt to the restrictions put in place due to pandemic and our activity groups were no exception. One of our activity volunteers, Rita, tells us how she has found moving from face-to-face groups in the office to running a group on the telephone.

‘I have, as a volunteer, been supporting the group activities for sometime prior to the present difficulties. Predominantly the Book Club and the Discussion Group.

Since March these groups have continued via the telephone. It has not all been ‘plain sailing’. Connecting with a group via a link-in process has produced some difficulties. Answer machines being the principal problem.

However, in the main, the groups are successful. I think of my part as being a link to give the individual members in each group contact with each other and participate in discussions which, not only keep friendships together, but also help to promote other perspectives. Needed by everyone, including myself, in the present circumstances.

The Books are chosen in advance by the members. Sometimes there are a few surprises. Most are really enjoyed, others less so, but always vigorously discussed.

The subjects for the Discussion Group are also suggested in advance by group members and both myself and the group have enjoyed many interesting, sometimes controversial topics. Again vigorously discussed.

I feel confident, in concluding, over the months where friends cannot meet in person that these telephone meetings have helped to maintain contacts with old friends and also make new ones’. **Rita Rawnsley**

Volunteer Training

When we started our Keeping in Touch project to support our members through the global pandemic and the national restrictions, we thought it would be a short term project and we could all get back to meeting face-to-face within a couple of months. How wrong we were!!! As this is not possible and given the strong interest in continuing the calls, we feel that now is the right time to look at incorporating the support we have provided into a formal training session. At present all volunteers receive a Volunteer Handbook and our Home Visiting and Community Activities volunteers receive an additional ‘Support in The Community’ handbook. Our Keeping

In Touch volunteer role will be incorporated into the Support in the Community Handbook which we will be issuing to all volunteers involved with the project. In addition all Home Visitors, Community Activities and Keeping in Touch volunteers will be required to complete an on-line safeguarding course and community support training.

If you do not have access to the internet then we will provide the training via telephone and a paper based quiz.

If you are involved with our virtual activity groups then you will only be required to complete the safeguarding course.

The Handbook will be sent out in the next few weeks. Dates for the training sessions will be arranged over the next few months.

Volunteer Christmas Parties

Tuesday 15th December 2-3pm via zoom

Wednesday 16th December 2-3pm via telephone

Volunteer Socials

Wednesday 27th January, 2-3pm via zoom

Thursday 28th January, 2-3pm via telephone

Tuesday 9th March, 2-3pm via zoom

Thursday 11th March 2-3pm via telephone

Please let us know if you would like to attend.

General Volunteer Enquiries, Home Visiting Service & Keeping in Touch

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Team Administrator / Keeping in Touch Reporting

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Fundraising

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Keeping In Touch / Activities

Caroline Robertson, Training and Engagement Manager
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Christian Waite, Activities and Volunteer Coordinator
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MySight York

live well with sight loss