

YorView

The newsletter of MySight York

Spring 2024



Members were able to smell, touch and taste the coffee at Starbucks. See page 15 for more details

MySight York
live well with sight loss

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YorView is the Newsletter of MySight York

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Editor: Barbara Fairs

From the Editor...

Welcome to the Spring edition of the YorView newsletter.

In this edition Scott gives us an update and says a big thank you to everyone who donated to our Urgent Appeal and outlines other ways in which you can support us.

Catherine also says a big thank you—this time to our wonderful volunteers and highlights how crucial they are to the services we provide.

Deb gets crafty in the kitchen with a range of tips and equipment that can help you to cook up a storm. She runs through everything from non-slip mats to a talking air fryer to help you stay safe in the kitchen.

Louise and Lydia give us a round-up of the current activities and Lydia, fresh from another tournament win, gives us more information about Visually Impaired Tennis. They also tell us about their recent coffee tasting adventures at Starbucks. Louise also has information about upcoming fundraising stalls and two new courses coming very soon.

Barbara

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From the Chief Executive



As we navigate through these challenging times, I want to extend my heartfelt gratitude to each and every one of you who have supported and continue to support MySight York.

Since our urgent appeal, we've been overwhelmed by the response from our community. Your contributions, whether big or small, have made a significant impact on our ability to continue providing essential services to those who rely on us.

We've witnessed first-hand how your donations have transformed lives and brought about positive change for blind and partially sighted people.

Our organisation continually changes and adapts to better suit the needs of our membership. Some of you may have noticed the 'To Let' signs on our Merchantgate building, and I would like to reassure you that whilst we are indeed moving this year, this is in the best interests of all of our members.

I know that change can often lead

to uncertainty and concern, especially when it comes to essential services like those provided here at MySight York. In this case however, it's important to know that relocation is aimed at improving accessibility, safeguarding our services, and enhancing the overall experience for the community we serve. Our plan is to expand our reach across the city whilst reducing costs and retaining city centre premises. This will allow us to be available in more locations, serving more visually impaired people across York.

We are, and will continue to be, the voice of blind and partially sighted people, offering invaluable resources, guidance, and a place of community. Rest assured, our commitment to serve you remains steadfast, and this move is a part of our ongoing efforts to better serve those needs.

Please join me in embracing our new chapter with optimism, knowing that MySight York's dedication to supporting those living with sight loss in York, remains unwavering.

If you would like to discuss our relocation or have any concerns or questions during this transition period, I encourage you to reach out to me directly.

Warm thanks

Scott

Healthwatch York has launched a short survey to gain opinions on local GP services across the city

Healthwatch York wants to know what you think about your local GP practice. What is working and what you would like to change?

They have launched a short survey to start a wider Healthwatch York project about primary care services across the city.

There have been many changes within primary care over recent years, and GP practices now offer a range of services in a variety of ways, so part of Healthwatch York's work will involve looking at what is available now and how to access the right care most efficiently.

Your answers will help Healthwatch York to understand the situation and prioritise topics for further investigation and discussion.

Please take a few minutes to complete this survey by visiting the survey link: <https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/F7MZ4B/>

Healthwatch York are aware that not everyone wants to respond to an online survey and accessible formats are required.

If you would prefer to access the survey in an accessible format, you can call Healthwatch York on 01904 621133 (choose option 3 for Healthwatch York), or email healthwatch@yorkcvs.org.uk.

The closing date for the survey is Friday 5 April 2024.

York Cares Social Clubs

York Cares, an independent charity which brings communities and businesses together to make York a better place, is running a series of social clubs for neighbours to come together.

There will be a Coffee Morning on 21st March 10 – 11.30 at the Community Furniture Store, Unit 29, Raylor Centre on James Street. Join them for a cuppa and a biscuit and access to some basic tech

support for using your device.

Chop and Chat will take place on 28th March 10.30-12.30 at the Spurriergate Centre. Come along to stay warm, make and share soup in a friendly environment. Ingredients will be provided by York Cares so please book your place by calling Megan on 07769 178998.

For more information on York Cares go to www.yorkcares.co.uk

LOOK Holiday Flat

LOOK, the charity supporting visually impaired young people, has a holiday flat in Scarborough available to book for any family living with visual impairment.

The flat is in Scarborough and is well positioned, just a short walk to the beach front. It has been recently refurbished to make it as comfortable and welcoming as possible.

The Holiday Flat is located on the ground floor of a small apartment block and can house up to five people, with 3 bedrooms, a living

room with two large sofas and a TV and DVD player as well as a dining area with a table and chairs. The bathroom has a WC, bath and shower. The kitchen is fully equipped with everything you would need for your holiday stay including an oven and washing machine.

Rates vary from £60 per night to £70 per night in high season and there is a minimum 3-night stay.

For more information and a calendar to check availability, visit: <https://www.look-uk.org/HolidayFlat> or contact Look on 07464 351 958.

Calling all Sports Fans

Cricket fixtures out now!

RNIB accessible fixture listings enables you to keep up with the domestic game as well as international matches.

From the County Championships to the fast and furious T20 Cricket World Cup. Available to buy in braille, on DAISY audio CD and via email. All formats are priced £3.13. Contact RNIB on 03031239999 to sign up.



The RNIB are currently preparing the 24-25 football fixtures accessible listings which will be available around May/June time. This will include listings for all leagues, international fixtures and final league tables from the previous season.

And in advance of a big Summer of sport the RNIB is also working on accessible info for the Paris Olympics which will run from Friday July 26th to Sunday 11th August this year. Whichever sport takes your fancy, the guide will help you follow all the action.



Reduced and free bus travel

The York Enhanced Bus Partnership has just launched an extension of their subsidised bus fares for young people, up to 18 year olds

They have improved the eligibility to allow up to three children accompanied by an adult – now including those using a concessionary pass – to travel for free. Previously they needed to be accompanied by a fare paying

adult, now anyone using a pass can also take advantage of the offer.

If a child or young person aged between 5-18 is travelling unaccompanied by an adult on any bus which starts and ends within the City of York boundary the cost of a single fare ticket is £1.00.

Full info on the bus fares can be found here: <https://www.itravellyork.info/news/article/42/extension-for-1-or-free->

Community Connect - Blind Golf – Have A Go Days

Have you played golf in the past or are you interested in trying it for the first time?

As a part of the Community Connect project, England and Wales Blind Golf are collaborating with MySight York and City of York Council, to run some Have A Go Days throughout the year at local driving ranges with tuition included for all ages.

Golf is a great way for families to share quality time together, both outdoors and indoors, whilst making new friends. Driving ranges technology now make golf far more accessible, with feedback for people with limited sight.

We are currently finalising details, but please contact Lydia (Community Connector) on 01904 636269 or email hello@mysightyork.org to express your interest and you will be added to the waiting list.

Office Closure Dates:

Stocktaking :Wednesday 27th and Thursday 28th March

Easter Holidays: Friday 29th March until Wednesday 3rd April

Bank Holiday Monday 6th May

Bank Holiday Monday 27th May

Eye Care Support

Information on support groups and services

Eye Clinic Liaison Officer (ECLO).

Being diagnosed with an eye condition can be difficult to come to terms with and everyone reacts differently. It can be an extremely challenging time both practically and emotionally. Our Eye Clinic Liaison Officer (ECLO), Helen Flett, runs the sight support service at York hospital. Support is available to patients, relatives and carers.

Helen works Monday to Friday and is available via an appointment system although, some drop-in times are available.

Helen is able to support you with:

- Understanding your diagnosis
- Managing the emotional impact
- Certification and registration
- Confidence and independence
- Daily tasks such as reading and cooking
- Getting about safely

If you would like any support, speak to a member of the eye clinic team at your appointment or call 01904 721 858.

Glaucoma Patient Forum

York Hospital's Glaucoma Patient's Forum will be starting up again on Wednesday 13th March 2023, it will be held on 2nd floor of the eye

clinic, 5pm – 6pm.

The forum provides an opportunity for Glaucoma patients to come together for peer support, to learn about the latest research into the condition and the support services available in the community.

If you would like to attend or have your details added to the mailing list, please email yhs-tr.YorkGlaucomaForum@nhs.net or call 01904 725 206.

Charles Bonnet Syndrome Support

Esme's Umbrella, the support group for people living with Charles Bonnet Syndrome, is hosting a relaxed and friendly Information Day in Manchester on 16th March at Manchester Metropolitan University. The event is free and there will be CBS researchers speaking. Judith Potts - Founder of Esme's Umbrella - will talk about the work of the charity and there will be a chance to ask questions, and to hear from people who live with CBS.

Tickets are available at <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/esmes-umbrella-information-day-tickets-792995038507?aff=EM1>

Or call Esme's Umbrella helpline on 020 73913299.

Befriending and Volunteering

Catherine Bamford tells us about our wonderful volunteers and the fantastic Befriending Service they help us to run

Befriending

We are really lucky to have a wonderful team of Befrienders who either visit or call their clients on a regular basis. The telephone befriending project, Keeping-in-Touch, was borne out of the pandemic when all home visiting matches moved to telephone calls. We had so many positive comments about the difference the calls make that we decided to keep the project going. Our trained, friendly volunteers ring or visit clients either weekly or fortnightly.

Our home visitors also make the world of difference to their clients. This can be summed up by one client who said 'my volunteer cuts the loneliness out of my life'. There is a waiting list for a home visitor but please get in touch with Catherine as we may just have the perfect volunteer for you.



A client
with his
volunteer
visitor

Volunteering

Without our volunteers we would not be able to provide the services we do.

Whether this is as a befriender, providing that one to one contact for a person living with sight loss, or one of the many other roles, every volunteer is vital to this organisation.

Volunteers provide support for activity groups, which can be weekly, monthly or ad hoc, help with fundraising, deliver equipment as part of our home connections service or even coming into the office to help with admin tasks. We also run our Counselling Service with the help of volunteers.

Volunteers often say that they get as much benefit as the clients they are supporting, so if you think this is something you would like to get involved with then please contact Catherine on 01904 636269.

And to everyone who already volunteers their time with us can we say a great big THANK YOU—we really appreciate everything you do.

Equipment and Information Update

Deb Wheller runs through aids to help you in the kitchen

Ready Steady Cook!

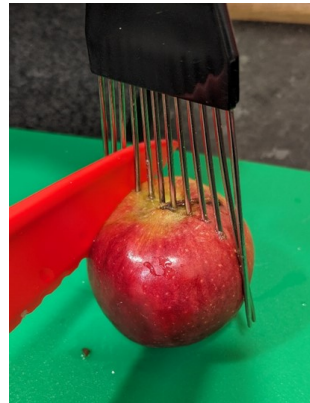
Preparing meals from scratch allows you to cook and eat the foods you enjoy. It often has added nutritional benefits, you can pile up the veg and saves on your budget too. Although cooking can sometimes be challenging here are a few tips that may help:

- Arrange your kitchen so that everything you need is easily to hand
- Ensure things are kept in the same place to suit you.
- Keep work surfaces clutter free.
- Label and mark items to meet your needs
- Spend time preparing the ingredients before you start to cook.
- Give yourself time to cook as it always take longer
- Pre chopped veg can be useful for the ones you find more difficult to prepare. Frozen veg and fruit can be useful too: you to avoid the preparation fuss, you use just the right amount and you don't have to worry about things going out of date

Other ideas:

- Use a small blender to whizz up items which need a finer chop, use a silicone garlic peeler to rub away the skin from your garlic cloves ,or use a jar of chopped garlic instead

- Use a good knife, keeping your knuckles against the side of a knife as a guide, this helps with measuring the



thickness of the slices you want too, alternatively try a metal afro comb to chop fruit and veg.

Inset the prongs into the veg hold the combs handle and guides the knife

between the prongs to create slices

- Use a boil alert disc to allow you to hear when water in a pan has reached a rolling boil
- Use a D shaped peeler to protect your hands
- Use contrasting coloured chopping boards, one with a funnel end can help with directing food into a pan.

If you have some sight ensure you have good lighting in your kitchen so that you can make the most of useable sight you may have by increasing clarity and contrast. Contrast is how an object or text stands out from its background. You might choose to adjust standard equipment you already have by adding bump ons to give you a visual or tactile clue or explore special equipment which helps you to carry on cooking.

New

Talking Air fryers are described as a fast and energy- efficient way of cooking. The new Cobolt Air fryer benefits from the inclusion of speech with all functions spoken in a clear male voice. With a 4 litre capacity and raised tactile touch sensitive buttons the cooking temperature can be set manually between 80-200C for between 1-60 minutes. It also benefits from 5 preset categories, a countdown timer. The fryer will also announce “rearrange the food” half way through.

Cobolt Talking Air Fryer £99.95



This product is now on display alongside our range of talking microwave ovens, talking single and double induction worktop hobs, talking kitchen scales, and food thermometers.

Talking kitchen scales

measuring in imperial or metric to suit your preference they can measure wet or dry ingredients. Speech is in a clear male English voice. £57.00

Silicone oven shelf edge protector guards can protect your arms from hot shelves when reaching into your oven. With interlocking openings they are easy to fit and stay securely in place.



Oven gauntlets are another way to protect your hand and arms.

Dycem can be cut to size and a great use is to line clear acrylic drawers and shelves in your fridge shelves. It is available in 1 meter rolls in red, blue or yellow and has multiple uses across the kitchen. £11.25



Update on Activities

Louise Railton reminds us of MySight York's regular groups, as there have been a few recent changes

MySight York Activities

Coffee Morning Discussion Group: Face to face (with telephone option) on the second Wednesday of every other month (March, May, July, September, November 2024). Telephone only on the fourth Wednesday of every other month (April, June, August, October, December 2024). 10:30am - 11:30am

Audio Book Group: First Tuesday of the month. Face to face and zoom. 10:30am - 11:30am

Support with MySight: Face to face (with telephone option) on the first Monday of every other month. 2:15pm - 3:15pm

Telephone Speakers Group: first Monday of every other month. 2:15pm - 3:15pm

VI Tennis: Run by a York Disability Tennis Network qualified coach, held at the University of York, Sports Centre. Weekly, every Monday. 11:30am - 12:30pm

Esme's Friends: Face to face (with telephone option) on the second Tuesday of the month. 11am - 12pm

Telephone Quiz: Last Friday of the month. 3pm - 4pm

Chair-based Tai Chi: York-based Tai Chi practitioner, Richard, runs these sessions every other Monday at MySight York. 11am - 12:30pm

Accessible Board Games: Every other Monday (alternates with Tai Chi) at MySight York. 11am - 12:30pm



Playing dominoes

Chair Exercise: Run by Xercise Haxby at MySight York. Weekly, every Thursday. 10:30am - 12pm

Knit Natter: A friendly group who meets for a chat and knitting at MySight York. Last two Tuesdays of the month. 10:30am - 12pm

If you are interested in joining any of our groups or require some more information, please contact Louise on 01904 636269.

Visually Impaired Tennis

Lydia Wrightson explains how VI Tennis tournaments work

I'm Lydia, the Community Connector at MySight York. You may also know I am a Visually Impaired Tennis National Champion.

Visually impaired tennis tournaments are held all around the UK and are organised by referees at each competition. There are approximately 5 tennis tournaments a year.

Regional VI tennis tournaments are played over two days, on a weekend.

The national tennis tournament is a three-day event and is the final tennis tournament of the year.

Everyone who plays in the tournaments is in a sight category, this is so it is fair for the other players who you are competing against. There is an official organiser at each of the competitions who plans the event and makes sure everything runs smoothly.

I have been playing visually impaired tennis for 10 years and competed in my first tennis tournament 8 years ago.

Through MySight York and York Disability Tennis Network, we run VI Tennis sessions on a Monday to

get players started and to learn the basics of the game.

The tennis session is at 11.30am to 12.30pm in Heslington, York. The visually impaired tennis session is run by a qualified tennis coach and we also have volunteers who help.

If this sounds of interest to you, or you would like to discuss VI Tennis with me further, please give me a call or send me an email.

You can email me on:

lydia.wrightson@mysightyork.org

or call my direct line on 01904 731124



Lydia in action on the court

Member's Column

By Janet Hazelwood

Remembrance Day at the Cenotaph

Janet Hazelwood tells us about taking part in the Cenotaph march on Remembrance Day 2023, with her grandson Dillon, at the invitation of Blind Veterans UK.

"We were up at 5:30 dressed and breakfasted and ready to go. Taxi booked for 7:45 to go to Horse Guards Parade by 8:30. My granddaughter had to leave us before we got there as no one without a pass could enter. Dillon and I found the Blind Veterans contingent.

We were in the second row of the flight and we stood around for a while. Thank goodness for the 2 pairs of stockings I had been advised to wear, plus other unmentionables.

We just stood till it was time to set off. We had been chatting with the people around us – all Blind Veterans and partners. We moved towards the Cenotaph. The crowds were about 8-10 people deep and I got a lovely warm feeling from them as we marched past after the service at the Cenotaph. We got back to the Horseguards Parade where Princess Anne gave us a salute and then we were dismissed.

I got a text from my granddaughter that they would meet us at the corner of St James Park, where I had a nice cup of tea then we had lunch and got a taxi to the hotel where we left the car and set off for her house down in Wiltshire.

I was still on a high from the day so we chatted on the journey back. It was a day to remember, tiring but lovely."



If you would like to tell us about an interesting event in your life or share something you think may be of interest or help to other members of MySight York, then please contact us on 01904 636269 or email barbara.fairs@mysightyork.org

Our newsletters are produced in February, May, August and November.

Community Connect Project

Louise Railton tells us about a recent coffee tasting event

Community Connect – Starbucks Sensory Coffee Tasting Event

Some members had a great time at the Starbucks Coffee Tasting event

As a part of the Community Connect project, in collaboration with Starbucks Monks Cross, we organised a trial session of the Starbucks Sensory Coffee Tasting Event on Wednesday 21st February. Five members attended the trial coffee tasting session, with an additional sessions being planned in the future.

Alice, the Supervisor at Starbucks Monks Cross, has previously completed her Starbucks Coffee Master Programme training. The session gave members an opportunity to increase their coffee knowledge. Everyone was encouraged to use their senses throughout the session, with a particular focus on smell and taste.

Alice did a brilliant job of explaining to the group the professional tips and tricks for getting the best out of your coffee, depending on your setup. The group practiced describing and sharing their sensory experiences with others. Everyone had a wonderful morning also trying a variety of coffees, which were paired with a selection of food such as cookies, dark chocolate, milk chocolate, white

chocolate, raspberries, strawberries, chocolate and orange flapjack, plus many more!

Throughout the sensory session, everyone seemed to form a deeper appreciation for the beverages they already love.



Feedback included:

“The session was very accessible.”

“Thank you to Starbucks Monks Cross and MySight York for putting on such an accessible and fantastic experience—it was a total success.”

“I didn’t know what to expect but the event experience was outstanding and wonderful. Thank you.”

As the trial sensory coffee tasting session was such a success, Louise and Lydia would like to gather expressions of interest for sessions to be run in the future.

Please contact Lydia via Lydia.wrightson@mysightyork.org, or phone her on 01904 636269.

Fundraising News

By Scott and Louise

Urgent Appeal...Update

Dear Friends

In our previous newsletter, we laid bare the challenges we face as an organisation dedicated to supporting blind and partially sighted people here in York and the surrounding areas. Today, we are overwhelmed with gratitude as we write to express our heartfelt thanks for your generous response to our urgent appeal.

Your support is not just a donation; it's a lifeline for us and the individuals we support. Thanks to your kindness and generosity, we have received an outpouring of support that fills us with hope and determination to continue our mission of making a difference in the lives of visually impaired people.

With your contributions, we are one step closer to ensuring the sustainability of MySight York and the continuation of our invaluable services. Your donations will directly fund our expert Equipment and Information Centre, Eye Clinic Liaison Service, Specialist Counselling, Befriending Services, Groups and Activities, Transcription Service, Sight Loss Awareness Training, Technology Support and much more. Each of these services is a vital resource for those living with sight loss, and your support ensures they remain accessible to

all who need them.

Since launching the appeal in November last year, donations to our online Enthuse platform stand at **£40,700** bringing us closer to our goal of securing £60,000 to safeguard the future of MySight York and the vital services we provide.

There is still time to donate by visiting:

www.mysightyork.enthuse.com/cf/urgentappeal

or telephone our office on 01904 636269.

Legacies

Another way people donate to MySight York is by leaving a lasting legacy from a gift in their will.

Every year people choose to leave a gift in their will to MySight York which helps immeasurably to enable us to continue providing essential services.

Leaving a gift in your will is a simple yet profound act of generosity that can make a world of difference. It allows you to support causes that are close to your heart, even after you're no longer here. Your legacy gift can help ensure that organisations such as ours can continue to make a positive impact for years to come.



At MySight York we have partnered with Bequeathed to offer a free and accessible will writing service that allows every supporter to make a Will For Good. Making your will with Bequeathed is extremely easy and takes less than an hour of your time.

There will be an online will interview (20 minutes) followed by a telephone or video legal consultation with a professional (30 minutes) who will discuss your situation and wishes, ensuring your will caters to your needs. Then you receive your free will in the post. Simply sign it and have it witnessed. Bequeathed's legal firm will verify its execution and securely store it for you, all at no cost.

It's important to remember that you don't have to be wealthy to leave a legacy. Every gift, regardless of its size, has the power to make a difference. Whether you choose to leave a specific sum of money, a percentage of your estate, or even a valuable asset, your contribution will be deeply appreciated and will help shape the future.

If you're interested in discussing this further, please visit:
www.bequeathed.org/mysightyork
or telephone our office on 01904 636269.

Upcoming stalls

Stalls tend to quieten down in winter, but now we're approaching spring we have some more stalls taking place.

**York Older People's Assembly
Information Fair at New Earswick
Folk Hall (Hawthorn Terrace,
YO32 4AQ) – Monday 4th March,
10am – 1pm**

**Knitting stall at Marjorie Waite
Court's Spring Fair (Clifton,
York, YO30 6DX) – Saturday 16th
March, 10am – 3pm**

**Small tombola at Strensall
Spearehead Community Café
(Spearehead Hall St Mary's
Church, Strensall, YO32 5XU) –
Wednesday 20th March, 9am –
12noon**

**Knitting and information stall at
York Hospital (The Hub, in the
entrance to Ellerby's Restaurant)
– Friday 22nd March, 9am – 2pm**

**Stall at St James the Deacon
Church's Community Café
(Woodthorpe, YO24 2SE) –
Thursday 11th April, 9am – 12noon**

**Knitting and information stall at
York Hospital (The Hub, in the
entrance to Ellerby's Restaurant)
– Friday 19th April, 9am – 2pm**

**If you have items you wish to
donate towards the tombola,
please contact Louise on 01904
636269.**

New Courses

Louise Railton updates us on the courses available to help those new to sight loss and those looking to enhance their computer skills

Living Well with Sight Loss Courses

These courses are for anyone new to sight loss or experiencing recent vision changes. The course is over two full days, which gives you the opportunity to meet other people in similar circumstances, share experiences and learn.

You can listen to information about and discuss:

- registration
- mobility and orientation
- daily-living aids
- travel and transport
- benefits;
- social and leisure activities
- your wellbeing

Quotes from previous participants:

“I found it very informative and helpful. The interaction between people in mutual agreement and support was key. We felt that we didn’t feel forgotten about like in other services.”

“I’m in a bad way but the Living Well with Sight Loss course was the best. It is the first step of the ladder and, in my opinion, a must. When you walk through the MySight York door, you start

to feel that a weight has been lifted. Talking to other people got me to socialise and gave me confidence. It has also given me the ability to give back too. I would recommend the Living Well with Sight Loss Course to anyone.”

You are very welcome to bring someone with you as support. You’ll get practical advice, information and guidance on organisations, products and services. Lunch is provided. The next Living Well with Sight Loss Course will take place for two full days, on Friday 26th April and Friday 3rd May.

Learning to Listen to Your Computer Courses

Two new sessions for Windows users are coming up. Run by York Learning in collaboration with MySight York at Explore York Central Library, they will take place on two Friday afternoons: 10th and 17th May 2024, from 1.30-3.30pm.

For more information or to book your place on the above courses, please contact Louise Railton by calling 01904 636269 or email louise.railton@mysightyork.org

Audio Described Performances

Audio Described Romeo and Juliet Leeds Grand Theatre Spring 2024

Northern Ballet's production of *Romeo & Juliet* tours to Leeds Grand Theatre from Friday 8th March – Saturday 16th March 2024. There will be an audio described performance of *Romeo & Juliet* on **Saturday 16 March at 2.30pm**, with pre-show notes starting at **2.15pm**.

A free Touch Tour Insight Talk will take place at **12.15 – 1.30pm** on the same day.

Tickets for the audio described performance are priced from £15 per person and the same price applies to a companion. To book tickets or for more information, please call the theatre's access line on 0113 205 3899.

Please make sure to specify that you are booking for an audio described performance and let the access line operator know if you have any access needs. To book your free place on the Touch Tour Insight, please let the operator know that you wish to attend.

The live audio description will be delivered by ex-premier dancer Pippa Moore MBE and a specialist Vocaleyes practitioner, bringing the performance to life in your mind's eye with vivid descriptions of the

movement, action and drama that takes place on stage.

For more information about Northern Ballet's productions and audio described performances please contact the Northern Ballet Learning team on learning@northernballet.com We look forward to welcoming you and hope that you enjoy the show!

Or if you prefer to stay local the following performances are audio described at York theatres

Theatre Royal York 01904 623568

Blue Beard, Saturday 9th March at 2.30pm

A Midsummer Night's Dream, Saturday 13th April at 2.30pm

Grand Opera House

Joseph and the Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat, Saturday 13th April at 2.30pm

2.22 A Ghost Story, Saturday 4th May at 2.30pm

An Officer and a Gentleman, the Musical, Saturday 8th June at 2.30pm

The Accessibility Assistance line is **0333 009 5399**

Sensory Survey Update

Scott Jobson updates us on the recent Sensory Services Survey

The City of York Council has conducted a crucial survey to better understand the needs and preferences of people with sight and hearing loss in our community.

As mentioned in our Winter 2023 Newsletter, the survey served as a pivotal opportunity to voice your opinions and ensure that your needs are met effectively.

Why Your Input Matters?

Here at MySight York we rely heavily on community support, as we receive no funding from the Council for the invaluable services we provide to over 1,500 blind and partially sighted residents of York. Your participation in this survey therefore has helped demonstrate the importance of these services to ensure that they receive the recognition and support they deserve.

With the contract for sensory services being renewed this year, you have made your voice heard, to influence the direction of these vital commissioned statutory services.

We held special focus days, produced the survey in Braille, audio, large print and assisted people over the phone to complete. Whilst the full results have not yet

been shared on York Open Source Data, the initial findings highlight MySight York as a stand out and pivotal player.

By hearing directly from people affected by sight loss, commissioners are compelled to approach their decisions with empathy, compassion, and a genuine desire to improve lives. MySight York facilitates this human connection by amplifying the voices of our members and ensuring that our stories resonate with those responsible for shaping statutory services.

It is our view at MySight York that incorporating lived experiences into the commissioning of statutory services for sight loss is not just a matter of inclusivity; it's a matter of effectiveness and equity. By listening to the voices of those directly affected by sight loss, decision-makers in York must ensure that services are responsive to these needs, accessible to all, and driven by innovation and best practices.

Thank you for sharing your experiences which will now help the commissioning process, leading to more holistic, person-centred, and impactful services for people living with sight loss here in York.