

CONTACT

Issue 73



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Editorial

Welcome to Issue 73 of Sutton Vision's CONTACT Magazine.

Spring is traditionally seen as the season of renewal and this year, perhaps, we all feel a greater than usual need for that. For so many people, the last year has been challenging but finally the green shoots of a fresh new start are beginning to emerge.

There is also something of a sense of the new at Sutton Vision. We started 2021 with a new Chair of Trustees, Michael Parsons, and a new Vice Chair, Louisa Syrett. Our Chief Officer, Tegan Jones has been in his post for less than a year and has already made great strides in securing new funding for Sutton Vision and helping to develop a strategy to take us forward. We also welcome Vicky Blencowe, our new Assistive Technology Coordinator.

With so much happening, as the latest editor of CONTACT, I've enjoyed bringing some of our news together for you. As always, it's been a great team effort. I'd like to extend thanks to Hayley, Amanda, Vanessa, Anne, Vicky and the team, along with one of Sutton Vision's youngest volunteers, my daughter Maya, for all their help in putting together this issue.

We are always interested to hear what you think of CONTACT and to receive ideas about articles for inclusion. Comments and contributions from the Sutton Vision community and partners are always welcome and may be sent to editor@suttonvision.org.uk.

Graham Randles, Sutton Vision Trustee

GO PAPERLESS, GO GREEN! If you would like to switch to an email edition of CONTACT, please let us know by sending an email request to hayleycampbell@suttonvision.org.uk.

From the Chief Officer



Blind and partially sighted residents of Sutton are some of the most vulnerable people in the Borough and the front-line staff at Sutton Vision have faced unprecedented challenges over the last 12 months, as nearly all of our service delivery options historically have been face to face. Many of the measures aimed at the general population, such as self-isolation or social distancing, are difficult for blind and partially sighted individuals but Sutton Vision is determined to find a way of making this work both now and into the future. We want to make sure that all of our members are able to continue leading an independent life. Despite the changing circumstances and lockdown number 3, Sutton Vision has continued to offer a telephone befriending service and our low vision clinic remotely.

Putting those who use our services at the heart of Sutton Vision has enabled us to adapt during the pandemic. Demand for services has increased, while we have been unable to open physically and this has forced us to move to a digital-first organisation and provide Assistive Technology advice remotely. By using technology as a facilitator for transformation, we can create services that simplify the big problems that our members face.

We hope that, as vaccine roll continues to roll out, a more stable future is near but until then, we need to be flexible in our approach. Please do not ever hesitate to contact us on 0208 409 7166 and we will always do our best to help you in any way possible.

Tegan Jones
Chief Officer

St Helier Hospital Update

Our Sight Loss Adviser, Ann Ryan, is available at St Helier Eye Unit for appointments, advice and support. If you attend in person at St Helier, you will have your temperature checked on arrival and will be given a mask to wear whilst in clinic.

For any questions or queries please contact Ann Ryan, Sight Loss Advisor on 07920 650 613.

Low Vision Clinic

The Sutton Vision office is closed until the Government lockdown has been lifted, however the Low Vision Clinic service continues to operate. We are offering either face-to-face assessments at our centre in Robin Hood Lane or an assessment by telephone if you prefer. Please telephone Sutton Vision on 020 8409 7166 for an appointment or more information. If you need to speak to our optometrist or need a replacement magnifier, please call and leave a message on our answer phone.

Telephone Befriending Service



If you are feeling lonely, isolated or just want someone to call you for a friendly chat, we can match you with a volunteer who will be happy to give you a call.

Covid-19 Update

The NHS is currently offering COVID-19 vaccinations in a staged approach, vaccinating those most at risk first. In England, the vaccine is being offered in some hospitals and pharmacies, at local vaccination centres run by GPs and at larger vaccination centres. More centres are opening all the time.

The COVID-19 vaccine is given as an injection into your upper arm. It is given as two individual injections. After your first jab, you will have the second jab between three and twelve weeks after the first one. It is currently being given to:

- People aged 64 and over
- People who are at high risk from coronavirus (clinically extremely vulnerable)
- People who are at moderate risk from coronavirus (clinically vulnerable)
- People who live or work in care homes
- Health and social care workers
- People who are eligible for Carers' Allowance
- People living with a learning disability

If you fall into one of these categories, you can book your vaccination appointments online or you can book appointments at a larger vaccination centre or a pharmacy that provides COVID-19 vaccinations. You do not need to wait to be contacted by the NHS.

If you are not eligible yet, please wait to be contacted. The NHS will let you know when it is your turn to have the vaccine. It is important not to contact the NHS for a vaccination before then.

Meet our Technology Co-Ordinator

Vicky built a professional career as a Building Surveyor for many years before starting to lose her sight to an inherited eye condition called Stargardt's Disease, which is an inherited form of Macular Degeneration. She has lived in Sutton since 2005 and worked for Sutton Council for 12 years.

Since then, Vicky has been a stay-at-home Mum while evaluating a new career path, based upon a passion for accessibility in the built environment and digital world for blind and partially sighted people. Her hobbies include designing and making celebration cakes, iPhone photography, listening to audio books and knitting.

Over the last couple of years, Vicky has become involved with the sight loss community in Sutton and London, playing visually impaired tennis, taking part in focus groups, campaigns and volunteering with the RNIB and Stargardt's Connected. She is also part of the ITV focus group for Audio Description and is on the ORIEL Advisory Group, scrutinising the accessibility proposals for the transfer of Moorfields Eye Hospital to its new London site in 2025/6.

In January 2021, Vicky was excited to be selected as a member of the new London Sight Loss Council, led by blind and partially sighted volunteers, which aims to advocate the needs of blind and partially sighted people and influence positive change in the capital.

“I'm excited about the ongoing progress of assistive technologies and digital accessibility which can help people living with sight loss to navigate this increasingly visual virtual world.”

Vicky has been a keen user of Assistive Technology for 20 years, firstly at work, but now increasingly for help with so many everyday activities. “The purchase of my first iPad in 2012 completely revolutionised my life! I really want to share these innovations with Sutton Vision. I want to show how empowering this can be, gaining confidence and independence in the modern world. Neither your age nor eye condition will be a barrier if you have patience and determination.”

Sudoku

Each Horizontal/Vertical line must contain one of each digit (1- 9)

		3			2		4	1
4		6	9	1		3		8
		7	6	3				2
6		2	5	7	8	9	3	
8		9			6	1		7
		4	1		3			
3	4							
		8		6	9			5
9		5		2	1	7	8	

Our New Assistive Technology Service



Be Brave!

Neither your age or eye condition will be a barrier if you have patience and determination. We have a team of Assistive Tech volunteers to help you every step of the way.

Assistive Technology – What is it?

Assistive Technology gives people living with disabilities, such as sight loss, access to the digital world by touch, magnification and voice, on devices such as smartphones with a large touch screen, tablets, such as iPads, and computers, Amazon Echo and Google home smart speakers.

We can use in-built accessibility tools in these devices to help us navigate our daily lives. For example: zoom-in magnification, increase in text size and contrast, screen readers to read any text aloud. You can even use your voice to control your device.

Apps – What are they?

Apps is short for ‘applications’ that we can put on our smart devices like mobiles and tablets. They help us carry out specific tasks, and many of these are generally FREE! You will need a WI-FI connection and an email address to access these.

For example, WhatsApp and text messages, emails, videocalls (FaceTime), read your post, play games, join in with social groups, such as exercise classes, attend webinars, listen to your library audio book, keep up with the young on social media platforms like Facebook, and help with getting around or even find your keys!

Using Your Voice

Voice Control is becoming the new normal for everyone. We can do all sorts of different things on our smart devices using a simple verbal command. Voice is built into almost all smart devices include Google Home, Alexa, iPhones and more.

Adrian, used the services of our Assistive Technology Volunteer Erica; this is what he had to say:

“Sutton Vision was a fantastic help to me. Zoom is now installed on my phone and I can get into a meeting. I am a bit slow yet, but I am certainly looking forward to joining in on Zoom meetings.

Thanks very much for asking for Erica to help me. She was absolutely amazing; so very patient with a technical novice such as myself.”

Adrian

Want to know more?

Please contact Vicky Blencowe, our new Assistive Technology Coordinator by email:

Vicky.blencowe@suttonvision.org.uk

or by calling 07971 952194 or calling the office.

Volunteer News

With the recent UK Government Roadmap released, Sutton Vision will be updating our website with new volunteer roles available from May 2021. This will include volunteer drivers, gardeners, tech support for the purpose of social media/podcast content, community awareness champions. If you or a family member have an interest in gardening, or our wider volunteering opportunities, please contact: amandalarter@suttonvision.org.uk or call us on 0208 409 7166.



There is a special call for some volunteer gardeners to help transform our courtyard garden, so we are ready for when we can return to social activities in a safe outdoor space. We would also like to put a call out for items we need donated: potted plant/herb cuttings; patio plants; compost; shed or exterior paint; hanging baskets; brackets; trellis etc. If you are feeling particularly creative, we have items (windchimes, ornaments, and materials to make a water feature) we would like to upcycle.

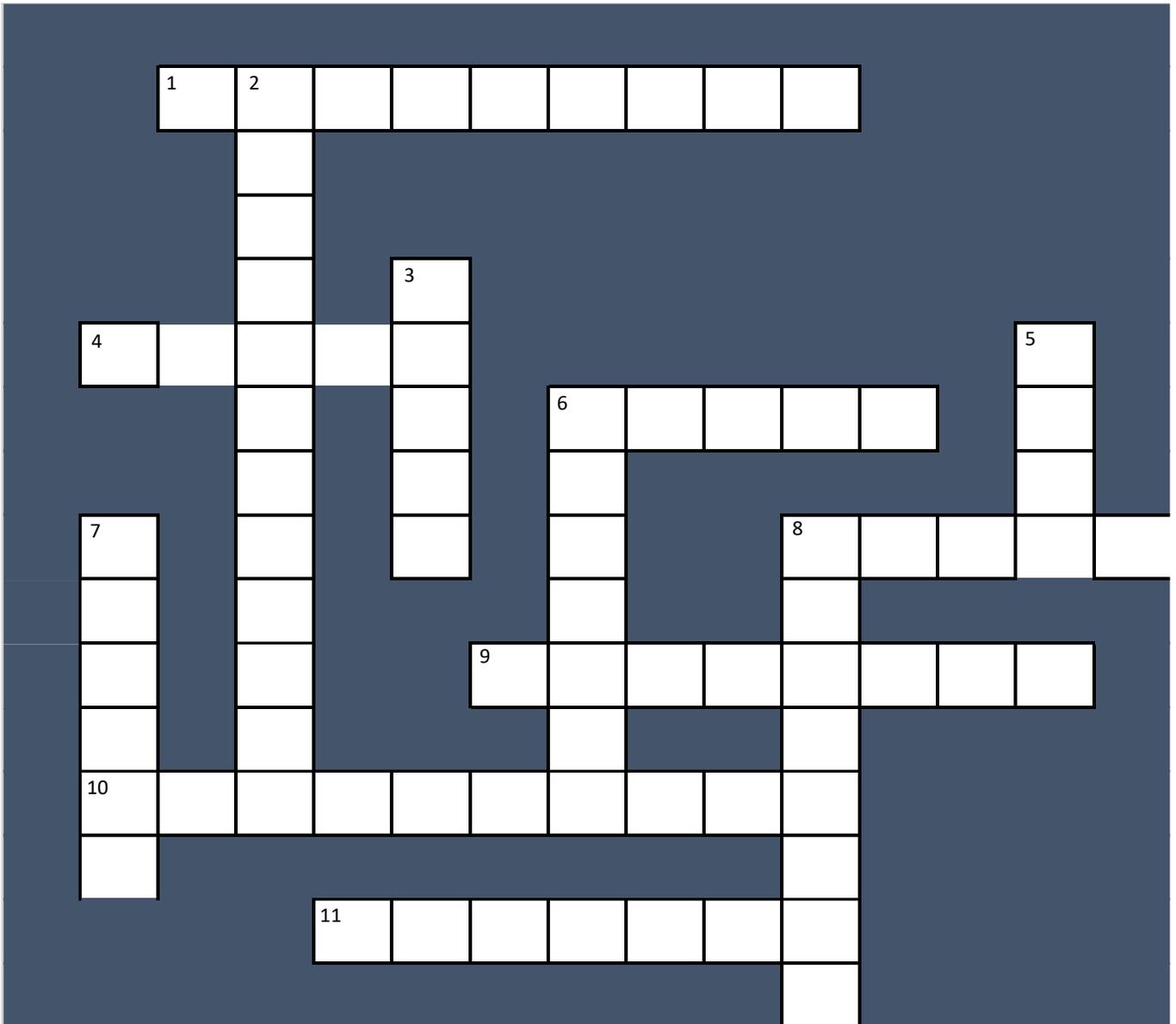
A big thank you to our team of telephone befrienders who have been doing a great job of contacting our VI members who have requested this service on a weekly basis during lockdown. We look forward to welcoming all our volunteers back to social activities in the garden in the Summer of 2021. We are always interested in new activities and would like to hear from you if you have a skill that you can offer our VI members, as a social activity or peer support group.

Quiz

Test your Knowledge

- 1) True or false? Larry the Cat has lived at No. 10 Downing Street for 10 years?
- 2) How long ago did the UK introduce the decimal system? 70 years ago, 60 years ago or 50 years ago?
- 3) Serbia's harvest of red gold peppers is turned into which popular spice?
- 4) Who wrote the 2019 Pulitzer Prize-winning book, "The Overstory"?
- 5) True or false? Heinz sells more than 540 million tins of baked beans each year in the UK?
- 6) What kind of animal caused a crash on a motorway in Adelaide, Australia?
- 7) On which Italian island is Mount Etna? Sicily, Sardinia or Capri?
- 8) True or false? A year on Mars lasts 91 Earth days?
- 9) How many 'Paddington' films have been released?
- 10) Which animal was Gromit, of "Wallace and Gromit" fame, originally supposed to be? A cat, bat or rabbit?
- 11) In which year did Elvis die?
- 12) How many wives did Henry VIII divorce?
- 13) Which planet in our solar system has the most moons?
- 14) What is the capital of Hungary?
- 15) Which is the deepest ocean?
- 16) What is Matt LeBlanc's character in "Friends" called?
- 17) Z and which other letter are worth the most in Scrabble?
- 18) What is the fifth book in the Harry Potter series?

Crossword



Crossword Clues

Across

- 1) Children love this and not just at Easter (9)
- 4) The first month of spring (5)
- 6) Part of a flower (5)
- 8) Could be a rabbit (5)
- 9) A flower that can be seen everywhere in spring (8)
- 10) Delivered by 8 across to children at Easter (6,4)
- 11) Country that makes some of the best chocolate (7)

Down

- 2) Traditional Easter treat (3,5,4)
- 3) Baby hen (5)
- 5) Weather we expect at this time of year (4)
- 6) You might eat one on Shrove Tuesday (7)
- 7) A holiday that occurs in Spring (6)
- 8) When a flower begins to flourish, it ... (8)

Quote of the month

"Tomorrow will be a good day."

Captain Sir Thomas Moore (30 April 1920 – 2 February 2021)

Census 2021 Information

Every 10 years information is collected about everyone in England and Wales. This is done through a series of questions about where you live and where you work; this is called a census. The census paints a picture of how many people live in England and Wales and a little more about what they do and how old they are. Census answers help organisations like Sutton Vision to decide how best to run services. It also informs how hospitals are designed, school populations and police numbers are forecast and what council services are required to help you in your area.

The next census is happening on Sunday 21 March 2021. Everybody needs to fill in the census. One person in your house can fill it in for everyone living in the house, or you can fill it in yourself. However, if one person fills it in on behalf of everyone living there, they must either also live there and pay bills, (for example have their name on the gas or electric bills) or must be a paid support worker or carer for people who live in the house.

You should include people who usually live there, even if they are away from home on that day. If someone is staying overnight, you can add them as a visitor. The law says you must fill in the census form. If you fail to complete it, you may have to pay a fine. The fine can be up to £1,000. You can fill in the form online or you can fill in a paper form; you need to phone the Census office if you want a paper form. You will get a letter with a code on it. It is called your access code. You need this code to fill in the census. You should keep it safe and only share it with people you trust.

If you need help to fill in the census, you can ask someone you trust to help you fill it in or go to one of our local Census Support Centres. Visit: www.census.gov.uk for more information.

Crossword answers

Across

- 1) Chocolate
- 4) March
- 6) Petal
- 8) Bunny
- 9) Daffodil
- 10) Easter eggs
- 11) Belgium

Down

- 2) Hot cross buns
- 3) Chick
- 5) Rain
- 6) Pancake
- 7) Easter
- 8) Blossoms

Quiz answers

1. True
2. 50 years ago
3. Paprika
4. Richard Powers
5. True
6. A koala
7. Sicily
8. False, a year on Mars lasts 687 Earth days
9. Two
10. A cat
11. 1977
12. Two
13. Saturn
14. Budapest
15. Pacific Ocean
16. Joey
17. Q
18. Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix

Useful Telephone Numbers

The following list of useful numbers includes an emergency number for the London Borough of Sutton and St Helier Hospital Eye Unit.

Advice Link Partnership Sutton (ALPS)	020 8254 2616
Age UK (Sutton)	020 8770 4090
Friendly Club	020 8669 4106
London Borough of Sutton	020 8770 5000
L B of Sutton Referral Point	020 8770 4565
Macular Society (National)	01264 350 551
Macular Society (Sutton)	07970 525 143
Merton Sports & Social Club	020 8540 5446
RNIB Helpline	0303 123 9999
St Helier Hosp Eye Unit	020 8296 3800
St Helier Hosp Eye Unit EMERGENCY	020 8296 3817
Sight Loss Advisor Ann Ryan	07920 650 613
Sutton Carers Centre	020 8296 5611
Sutton Talking Newspaper	020 3759 6679
Sutton South Hello	07790 031 764