

Sutton Vision
Enabling and Empowering

CONTACT

Spring Issue 66



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Editorial

A warm welcome to the Spring 2019 Edition of Sutton Vision's CONTACT Magazine. We sincerely hope you find the articles of interest. There is a good deal more information on our website www.suttonvision.org.uk.

"The Spring wakes us, nurtures us and revitalizes us. How often does your Spring come? If you are a prisoner of the calendar, it comes once a year. If you are creating authentic power, it comes frequently."
Poem by Garry Zukav

Spring is such a miraculous time of year! We all seem to appreciate longer days, warmer weather, daffodils and the crocus in bloom. As we start a fresh new year, we at Sutton Vision, hope all our members enjoy the 'fresh' look of Contact.

Are you creative as the poet above suggests? If so, then why not create an article for CONTACT. Comments and contributions from Sutton Vision members and local partners are always welcome and can be sent to our Editor, Michael Parsons, by post or at editor@suttonvision.org.uk. We are always interested to hear what you think of the magazine and to receive ideas about articles for inclusion in future editions.

Please note that the deadline for the Summer 2019 edition of CONTACT is Monday 3rd June 2019. Thank you

Quote for the Quarter

I expect most of us have heard, or used, the expression, "Where one door closes, another door opens!" ...but that is less than half of it!

The following is the full quotation from Alexander Graham Bell:

"When one door closes another door opens; but we so often look so longingly and so regretfully upon the closed door, that we do not see the ones which open for us."

Fond Farewell

It is with a sad heart that we say goodbye to Andrea Dix. After nearly 15 years Andrea has made the decision to leave Sutton Vision. Andrea has been a valued and extremely dedicated colleague who has always gone above and beyond her role.

I hope you will join Sutton Vision staff and Trustees in wishing Andrea every success in her future endeavours, you will be missed enormously!

Jacqui Thomas

Professional Vision Services Focus Day

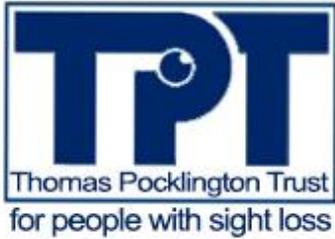
Professional Vision Services will be holding a Low Vision Focus Day here at Sutton Vision on Wednesday 1st May 2019

Professional Vision Services manufacture and sell low vision aids to enhance reading. Please see the enclosed flyer or their website www.professional-vision-services.co.uk for more information

The Focus Day will run between 10.00 a.m. and 2.30 p.m. If you are interested in attending please telephone Vanessa on 020 8409 7166 or e-mail her vanessavalentine@suttonvision.org.uk to make an appointment.

Tech Talk

For practical advice, information and really useful tips on your smart devices and apps designed for people with sight loss why not join our Tech Talk Group. To register your interest please contact Amanda 020 8409 7166 or e-mail amandalarter@suttonvision.org.uk



“Works For Me” Employment Programme

The “Works for Me” programme in partnership with Sutton Vision, provides expert employment advice for blind and partially sighted people. We can help with getting work or retaining your existing job. The programme is open to all visually impaired people who live, work or study in London between the ages of 18 – 65.

- One to one advice from our employment expert. Available by phone/email/face to face.
- Groups led by people sharing their experiences of working with sight loss.
- Putting you in contact with other experts that can help. IT trainers, counsellors and self-employment advisors.
- Our networking events put you in touch with other blind and partially sighted people who are in work or looking for work.

Interested? Please contact: Amardeep Tokhi

E-mail: Amardeep.tokhi@pocklington-trust.org.uk or call 07773 584028 for more information.



Old Spectacles

A really big thank you to all of you that kindly brought in old glasses to Sutton Vision for us to take to Vision Express in Cheam Park Farm Tesco. They asked us to say a very big ‘THANK YOU’ from them, we are still happy to collect these from you if you still need to have a clear out.

Shirley and Mick Mitchell



Wallington High School for Girls Meets Dragon's Den!

On Wednesday 27th February we had the opportunity to visit Wallington High School for Girls and talk to a year 10 group regarding them putting Sutton Vision forward for their charity event which could mean a reward of £1,000.

We left home at 7.30 a.m. ready with resources and aids from Sutton Vision to show the students and let them try them out.

We met the tutor group with their form tutor, they told us why they had chosen Sutton Vision as their charity to support. The students told us some of their ideas if their bid is successful once they have made their presentation later during this half term.

We were able to give them a good introduction of why Sutton Vision exists and explained the role and the importance of such a charity in the community. It was just like being in front of the Dragons in the Den but in this case 30 faces!!!

The students were delightful, asking questions, having a try with some of the resources we had taken to show them; the simi-specs and magnifiers especially Mick's electronic magnifier.

The girls took lots of notes and photos of some of the items we had shown them and with us too. We left them with Sutton Vision leaflets and copies of 'Contact'.

We have offered further help if needed to put their presentation together, they would like us to return when they make the presentation to the school. It was a great morning, let's keep our fingers crossed for a successful project. Shirley and Mick Mitchell

Meet the Trustee...

Over recent issues of CONTACT you will have read about many of Sutton Vision's Trustee's...but, now it's my turn. You will have seen some of my work as CONTACT's Editor, now you'll read about the 'man behind the pages'!

My name is Michael Parsons. My birthplace was a small town in Berkshire called Wokingham (the home of former Guide Dog centre, Foley Court. I am second in line of four siblings.

Throughout my education I had to sit in the front desks otherwise I could not see the blackboard. My mother had taken me to the ophthalmology clinic at a Reading hospital since I was 4 years old. We'd been led to believe I was just myopic (short-sighted). During our formative and teenage years, my older brother and I had been strongly encouraged to enter the UK armed forces by my father. My older brother entered the Royal Navy but when I tried to enter all three armed forces, I failed the medical each time! At that time they were not allowed to say!

For a while I felt completely lost, not knowing what to do as a career. I started on a pathway that, on reflection, appeared to be inspired. I enjoyed woodwork at senior school, so at 16, I started a Carpentry & Joinery apprenticeship. On completion, having studied hard at college and night school moved onto being a Clerk of Works, managing multi-million-pound contracts on behalf of an architect.

Then...in my early 20's it all came crashing down. During one of my annual visits to the eye clinic, I noticed the consultant had changed and he believed in telling his patients exactly what was wrong. I can still clearly remember the scenario now, over four decades later. He informed me I had an incurable, degenerative eye condition called Retinitis Pigmentosa with a prognosis of blindness. I was utterly devastated.

My employer at the time put me on 'garden leave' for several months whilst they decided what to do with me, as it was deemed unsafe to work on construction sites. Eventually my employment was terminated on the grounds of 'permanent ill-health'!

After periods of rehab at an RNIB establishment, and then their commercial college in London, I secured a post at Barclays Bank as a telephonist. It felt good to be back at work but in no way was I stretched, often feeling wasted and bored!

Over the next three decades I had many varied and different employment roles in the private, public and voluntary sectors. I often had to change jobs due to ongoing sight loss. One of the things that I'm grateful for was my ability to be adaptable in many a different work scenario.

In early 1990's, following a second period of redundancy I managed to secure a post as Team Leader on the original RNIB Helpline. After a couple of years on the Helpline my career took yet another change of direction. Using my knowledge and skills gained in previous roles, I secured a post as Access & Training Consultant in the RNIB Access Consultancy Services. The main emphasis of the role was to deliver training to other professionals (e.g. Architects, Designers, Property Owners and Facility Managers) to ensure building and street environments were accessible on a pan-disability basis. I was so happy and fulfilled and finally felt I was making a difference in society.

Sadly, in Summer 2012 redundancy kicked in again. But, being in my late 50's I found it incredibly difficult to get another job – the factors being age, economic climate and disability. After a period of inactivity, I set up my own self-employed business with the aim of doing exactly what I did at RNIB. I called this role; Inclusive Access & Training Services (IATS) which I continue in a small way to date.

In Autumn 2012 I was invited to join the Board of Trustees of Sutton Vision, taking on the role of Access Champion on behalf of the clients in the Borough of Sutton. In 2016 I was appointed Vice-Chair and later that year I took over the role as Editor of CONTACT magazine.

In Summer 2016 my life took on yet another dimension when my God-Daughter suggested I try my hand at VI Cricket. After a couple of practice games I joined the squad and have not looked back!

In terms of family I am married and live in the Borough. I have four adult children, two daughters and two sons. I also have a Labrador / Curly-Coat Retriever Guide Dog called Easton, who is my fifth Guide Dog in 32 years.

After many varied and challenging life experiences, I no longer feel I need to prove myself, feeling secure. When I've travelled around the country, I have often been asked how I feel about my ongoing sight loss. I tend to reply along these lines:

"I have a wonderful wife, very supportive children, a good network of dependable friends, a job (latterly voluntary roles) I'm passionate about and feel fulfilled in, and a strong faith! Therefore, what have I got to complain about?"

Michael Parsons



Christmas Bake Sale

Thank you to our volunteers who baked cakes and biscuits for our sale which was held at Sutton Station on Tuesday 11th December. Also, thank you to our wonderful volunteers who, alongside Amanda, met at the station at 7.00 a.m. and sold until 9.30 a.m.

We are pleased to say that £272.00 was raised.



Christmas Lunch

On Wednesday 12th December a group of clients, family and staff met at Il Toscana Restaurant in Sutton for a very enjoyable lunch. The staff were very helpful, the food tasty and varied. All in all a lovely way to start our Christmas celebrations.



VI Leisure Group

Over the years a number of VI people and friends have met on a regular basis at various venues in the Borough for social groups and activities. The VILG organises its own programme and acts as the point of contact for participants. Although Sutton Vision supports and encourages the VILG and their activities, those partaking should be aware that any events organised directly by the VILG are independent of Sutton Vision and are the responsibility of the VILG only. If you are interested in finding out more please contact Sue Christie on 07891 783291 or e-mail susanchristie48@outlook.com

Community Low Vision Clinic

Sutton Vision, with funding from Sutton Clinical Commissioning Group, runs a fortnightly Community Low Vision Clinic at our premises in Sutton.

You will have an assessment with our Optometrist to find the solutions and establish which magnifying devices (if any) and other equipment will be of most help. Any equipment prescribed by our optometrist will be on a long term loan basis. A specialist rehabilitation officer from the Sensory Impairment Team will be available to give advice on your everyday needs, difficulties and discuss your goals.

This service is available to people who have been diagnosed with low vision (a sight problem which is not correctable by spectacles), who live in the London Borough of Sutton and who are not already using the low vision clinic at St Helier Hospital.

Our Low Vision Clinics are by appointment only. To book an appointment or ask any questions about the low vision clinics or the resource centre, please contact Vanessa Valentine on 020 8409 7166.

We look forward to hearing from you!

QUIZ

Test Your Knowledge!

Complete the proverb – fill in the missing word/s?

1. Two don't make a right
2. Hope for the best but for the worst
3. A pot never boils
4. Give a man a, he eats for a day. Teach a man how to fish, he eats for a
5. One man's is another man's treasure

6. Don't a man until you have a mile in his shoes
7. Keep your friends close and yourcloser
8. is the mother of invention
9. Don't the hand that feeds you
10. The pen is than the

Answers on page 14



Sutton Post Office Services

Sutton Post Office, 19 Grove Road, Sutton, SM1 1DX

Following a period of local public consultation and review, we have made the decision to proceed with to move the above Post Office into W.H. Smith at 118 High Street, Sutton, SM1 1LZ. Opening hours will increase to include Sundays.

We believe the best approach to retaining this branch, so it can continue to serve its community effectively and sustainably, is to transfer to a third party retailer. W H Smith already successfully operate over 130 Post Office branches to very high standards. We are confident that Sutton Post Office will meet those same high standards The current branch will close at 17:30 on Wednesday 27th March, with the new branch opening at 09:00 on Thursday 28th March 2019. The new opening hours at W H Smith are:

Monday – Saturday 9.00 to 17.30
 Sunday 10.30 – 14.30

There will be five serving positions in total; one screened and four open plan. Three self-service kiosks for mails transactions including home shopping returns, E Top-Ups, and a range of bill payments.

Access will be level with automatic doors at the entrance to the new premises. Low level serving counters, a low-level writing desk and hearing loops will be available.

The Friendly Club

Are you free on alternate Wednesday afternoons? Why not visit them at the Thomas Wall Centre, 52 Benhill Avenue, Sutton SM1 4DP.

The meetings are held from 2.00 – 4.00 p.m. Afternoon tea is served, entertainment, a quiz or a talk makes the meeting interesting and sociable. Transport is available. If you would like to know more about the group please telephone 020 3759 3546 or 07769 775700 or alternatively you can telephone us at Sutton Vision 020 8409 7166 and we will get in touch on your behalf.

Sutton Talking Newspaper (STN)

Here is a quick reminder about Sutton Talking Newspaper otherwise known as STN. It is part of a group of services provided UK-wide by local teams of volunteers. Each local Talking Newspaper is staffed by local volunteers who meet to record about half an hour of news mostly taken from their local newspaper. STN was formed over 40 years ago and records news items taken mainly from the Sutton Guardian.

We have a small recording studio in Carshalton, in a house situated behind the old Charles Cryer Theatre. A team of four people read out news items, which are copied on to CDs and memory sticks for our local visually impaired listeners. We also compile our own magazine recording called the Clarion, which covers a variety of topics which we hope are of interest.

Listeners have the choice of CD or memory stick format. We will even supply a memory stick player to any listener free of charge. Our recordings are sent out courtesy of the Post Office “articles for the blind” scheme.

In addition to this, our output can be accessed by any Visually Impaired listener who uses the Sonata Internet Radio as supplied by the British Wireless for the Blind Fund (BWBF) and downloaded direct from our website. Talking Newspaper Services has recently developed the Talking Newspaper Alexa Skill, which enables Alexa users to access many local newspapers.

STN currently is not on Alexa, but we offer something which many of our listeners say they love. In addition to our own recordings lasting about an hour per week, we give our memory stick listeners a regular selection of audio versions of popular national magazines, such as Woman's Own, Woman's Weekly, the Spectator, Hello, Saga, BBC History. In total, over 20 hours per week. Subscribers can listen to all of these or scroll through to just listen to their favourites. All this is totally free of charge to blind or partially sighted people in the London Borough of Sutton.

Our application form can be downloaded from our website www.suttontn.org.uk Sutton Vision also has a supply of our forms and can help with registering new listeners. If you have any questions about Sutton Talking Newspaper, please telephone or email Jill Nicol on 020 8642 1611 secretary@suttontn.org.uk or leave a message on our office answerphone 020 3759 6679. We are only in the studio on Thursday afternoons, but if you leave a short message with your name and phone number we will phone you back.

Our postal address is 1 Grove Cottage, Grove Park, High Street, Carshalton, Surrey, SM5 3BB

Sutton Talking Newspaper looks forward to hearing from new listeners and getting continued feedback from existing ones.



Milan Group

On Wednesday 27th February we were asked to address the ladies and gentlemen of the Milan Group, which meet at The Centre Milton Road Wallington. We have had the pleasure of meeting them before when we were invited to speak to them about Diabetes, but as we always do on our talks we always mention the work of Sutton Vision and why not!!!.

We told them about the Low Vision Clinics, the resource centre and the activities which are on offer. They liked the items we showed them and felt we should be very proud of the charity.

We gave them Sutton Vision leaflets and copies of Contact plus information regarding Sutton Talking Newspaper.

We hope to visit them again when they have another splinter group like this one. We were invited to stay to lunch, which looked lovely, but it had been a very busy morning (two talks) so declined this time but they kindly gave us a donation for Sutton Vision which we thanked them for and before we left we had our photo taken with the group.

Shirley and Mick Mitchell

GDPR - Data Protection 2018 Important Information

Following on from previous articles in Contact regarding Sutton Vision's commitment to compliance with the requirements of the Data Protection Act many of you will have received telephone calls from two of our volunteers, Jan and Joan. The purpose of the Act is to protect rights and privacy and to ensure that information is not processed without people's knowledge, and wherever possible, their consent. Thank you to those who have spoken to our volunteers and granted permission for us to retain your information. Having your permission gives us the opportunity to continue to offer you our services and allows us to send you information.

As you can imagine this is an ongoing project and calls are still being made. We would like to reassure you that when you do receive a call from anyone from Sutton Vision requesting this information you can always ask to speak to another member of the team or alternatively call us back for confirmation that the call is genuine. If you would prefer not to give information over the telephone you can ask for a letter to be sent to you.

If you would like further information or would prefer not to be contacted please telephone 020 8409 7166 or e-mail info@suttonvision.org.uk

QUIZ

Test Your Knowledge – Answers

Complete the proverb

1. Two WRONGS don't make a right
2. Hope for the best but PREPARE for the worst
3. A WATCHED pot never boils
4. Give a man a FISH, he eats for a day. Teach a man how to fish, he eats for a LIFETIME
5. One man's TRASH is another man's treasure
6. Don't JUDGE a man until you have WALKED a mile in his shoes
7. Keep your friends close and your ENEMIES closer
8. NECESSITY is the mother of invention
9. Don't BITE the hand that feeds you
10. The pen is MIGHTIER than the SWORD



Volunteer Recruitment

We are looking for new volunteers who would be interested in giving their time to support our social groups and interest groups – Music, Scrabble, Quiz, Tech Talk, Social Eyes, Singing, Gardening, Art & Craft and Knitting.

In addition, we would like to set up new activities suitable for our VI members. Please check our website for other volunteer services we offer including telephone befriending, home visiting & home admin. Our volunteer application form is available online via the website www.suttonvision.org.uk , e-mail info@suttonvision.org.uk or if you would like it posted to you contact Amanda 020 8409 7166.

Our Groups



All groups are ongoing

Lunchtime Quiz Monday 17 th June	(quarterly) 12.30 – 2.30 pm
Music Group Thursday 16 th May Thursday 20 th June	(3 rd Thursday of the month) 11.30 am – 1.30 pm 11.30 am – 1.30 pm
Tech Talk Thursday 23 rd May Thursday 27 th June	(4 th Thursday of the month) 10.00 am – 12.00 midday 10.00 am – 12.00 midday
Social Eyes Thursday 2 nd & 16 th May Thursday 6 th & 20 th June	(1 st & 3 rd Thursday of the month) 2.00 pm – 4.00 pm 2.00 pm – 4.00 pm

Scrabble Group (2nd & 4th Monday of the month)
Monday 13th May 2.00 pm – 4.30 pm
Monday 10th & 24th June 2.00 pm – 4.30 pm

Singing Group **NEW** (Last Wednesday of the month)
Wednesday 24th April 10.30 am – 12.00 midday
Wednesday 29th May 10.30 am – 12.00 midday
Singing for fun with our experienced volunteer using well known tracks & accessible lyrics

Art & Craft **NEW**
Wednesday 17th April 10.30 am – 12.30 pm
This session will be for card making.
We are still looking for another volunteer who can run this new group regularly, so if you know someone who would be interested please contact us.

Gardening **NEW**
New group starting this Spring to create a vegetable and sensory garden at our office in Robin Hood Lane. If you would like to join our volunteer on this weekly/fortnightly activity, please contact us on 020 8409 7166 – start date TBC

A little quote:

Sometimes we need someone to simply be there, not to fix anything or to do anything in particular, but just to let us feel that we are cared for and supported.

Regular Dates

For information on any of these activities please call Sutton Vision on 020 8409 7166 or e-mail info@suttonvision.org.uk

Event	Date	Venue
Music Group	3 rd Thursday of each month 11.30 a.m. – 1.30 p.m.	3 Robin Hood Lane, Sutton
Scrabble Group	2 nd and 4 th Monday of each month 2.00. – 4.30 p.m.	3 Robin Hood Lane, Sutton
Social Eyes	1 st and 3 rd Thursday each month 2.00 – 4.00 p.m	3 Robin Hood Lane, Sutton
Friendly Club	Alternate Wednesdays 2.00 – 4.00 p.m.	Thomas Wall Centre, Benhill Ave, Sutton
Hello! Club	Every Thursday 10.00 a.m -12.00 noon	Christchurch & St Philip, Cheam Common Rd, Worcester Park
Sutton Macular Group Monthly Meeting	2 nd Monday of the month 10.00 a.m. – 12.00 noon	Friends Meeting House Cedar Road, Sutton
VI Leisure Group Coffee Morning Waterstones	1 st Friday of each month from 10.30 a.m.	Waterstones Book Shop, High Street, Sutton
VI Leisure Group Book Club	4 th Monday of each month from 10.30 a.m.	Waterstones Book Shop, High Street, Sutton
VI Leisure Group Lunch Prince of Wales Pub	3 rd Tuesday of each month from 12.00 noon	The Prince of Wales, 28 Malden Road, Cheam,
VI Leisure Group Eve. The Hope Pub	1 st Monday of each month from 7.00 p.m.	The Hope Pub, 48 West Street, Carshalton
VI Leisure Group Coffee Morning Wallington	2 nd Wednesday of each month from 10.30 a.m.	Garden Café, Wallington Library



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	07500 913 223
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	020 8296 2000 (Ext 8718) 07920 650 613
Sutton Carers Centre	020 8296 5611
Sutton Talking Newspaper	020 3759 6679