



# Viewpoint

Your local sight loss charity news  
Issue 03 | Winter 2016/17

**NEW 2017  
PULLOUT  
CALENDAR**  
in this  
edition

## In this issue:

**6** Magnification Tips

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## A year of change

Hello and Happy New Year! Welcome to the third edition of our Viewpoint magazine.

2016 was a significant year of change for us and in this edition we report on the sale of our Darsdale care home, the sad passing of Trevor Chown and the introduction of Talking News on USB sticks.

Other highlights include useful tips for using a magnifier, our Volunteer Support Service and a round-up of festive activities.

### Don't forget:

Please let us know if you would prefer to receive it in an alternative format:

- CD
- Braille
- Email

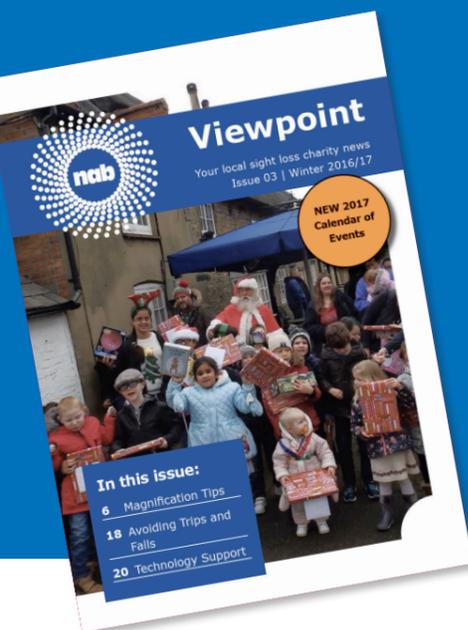
You can also read or listen to Viewpoint on our website:



[www.nab.org.uk](http://www.nab.org.uk)

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## We remember Trevor Chown

**OCTOBER was a very sad month for all of us at NAB, as it marked the death of a long-time Trustee and former Chairman of the Association, Trevor Chown.**

At the funeral on Friday 11th November John Wood, our former CEO, delivered a tribute to Mr Chown's long service and commitment to blind and partially sighted people in Northamptonshire.

Mr Chown's association with NAB goes back to 1970 when he became a Trustee.

In 1973 he succeeded his father Alderman C.A. Chown J.P. as Chairman of the Wardington Court Management Committee before being elected Treasurer of the Association in 1979 and Chairman in 1989, a position he held until deciding to retire in 2014. Thankfully, he remained a Trustee until his death.

Under his leadership NAB has seen major changes in the range and delivery of our services which he was keen to extend right across the county.



Alongside her husband, Mrs Cindy Chown ran NAB's Talking Newspaper service from its inception in 1976 until she relinquished the chairmanship earlier this year. She continues as Vice Chair.

Alex Lohman, CEO commented: "All of us at NAB offer our heartfelt condolences to Mrs Chown and all the family. We shall miss his expertise, energy and sound counsel".

## A Brighter future for Darsdale – and NAB

On 1st September NAB sold its residential care home, Darsdale, to an experienced local operator committed to building on Darsdale's excellent reputation for providing first class residential care and to developing the range of residential care services on offer.

Alex Lohman, Chief Executive of NAB said "Sadly, over recent years it had become increasingly clear that if Darsdale was to survive and prosper it had to offer a broader range of care services – services that we, as a local sight loss charity, simply lacked the expertise and resources to deliver. Recognising this, a decision was taken to try and sell the home as a going concern as this was seen as being in the best interests of the residents and staff".

Alex continued "Along with guaranteeing continuity of care for residents and employment for staff, the new owners are developing a range of new care services and intend to retain and further enhance Darsdale's well-deserved reputation for excellence in caring for people with sensory loss."

On behalf of everyone at NAB we wish the new owners, the staff and residents every success as, together, they write the next chapter in the history of Darsdale.



## Community Fundraising



"Very well done and thanks" to Angela To and her colleagues in the Mortgage Team at Nationwide Head Office after completing a sponsored walk around Pitsford Reservoir raising £1,351 for us.

A huge vote of thanks is also sent to Linda Kier the Ladies Team Captain at Brampton Heath Golf Club for raising £1,850, Rushden Town Band for donating £318 from their carolling and Northampton Winter Food Festival for donating £488 to our Northampton Social Group in December.

## Talking News

Our Talking News kept to schedule and the first recordings on USB memory sticks made their way to our listeners at the beginning of September.

The new digital format has been well received, with many of you commenting on the clarity of sound, the ease of navigation - and the extra RNIB Newsagent Magazines are a bonus!

**To register or find out more call: 01604 719193**

# Making the most of magnification



**How useful is YOUR magnifier?  
Do you find it difficult, frustrating or tiring to use?  
Are you always on the lookout for a better one?**

Well, you're not the only one! Magnifiers are not the easiest things to get on with. But without them, you are unlikely to get on well at all! What suits YOU depends on the nature and extent of your individual sight loss as well as your ability and perseverance in managing it.

Many people, in their search for something more effective, end up with a drawer-full of magnifiers, or even give up altogether. But don't despair, we're here to help you through the confusion.

All of our Community Support Workers have trained in magnification and can assess the strength you need and show you magnifiers in the

comfort of your own home.

We are commonly asked for the "largest magnifier possible please!" Sadly, for most, this is not the answer. But with a wide range of strengths and types to suit most purposes, good advice on correct positioning, technique and practice we can help find the one that works for you.

If you attend a hospital eye department you may be referred into the specialist Low Vision Service for prescribed magnification.

**The higher the magnification the smaller the lens and the closer you need to hold the magnifier to the eye**

## Steady Eye Strategy (SES)

is a technique specially recommended for reading.

It requires you to keep your gaze still, through the centre of the lens, and move the actual text right to left, through your best functioning piece of vision.

**Our team can advise you.**



## Useful tips

Using a magnifier can be tiring for the eyes, if used for any length of time. Little and often is the best approach. It does take time and practice but the benefits greatly outweigh the effort.

**Keep the lens of your magnifier clean. Put away in a bag or case when not in use to avoid scratching.**

Using a clipboard is useful as it keeps your newspaper, letters or magazines flat and still.

**A double-ended clamp can enable you to use a magnifier hands-free**

Different tasks call for different types of magnifiers. You may need more than one magnifier to meet all your low vision requirements.

# Focus on magnifiers

## Hand Held

### Advantages:

Those with a built-in LED light provide a direct clear white light over the text. Pocket magnifiers are handy to take out with you or to check the dials on cookers, washing machines etc.

### Disadvantages:

They are difficult to use for writing and if you don't have a steady hand it may be difficult to keep the lens in focus.



## Stand

### Advantages:

These sit on the page, allow you to maintain the correct focal position and are ideal if you have a hand tremor. They provide a shadowless light close to the page.

### Disadvantages:

They are quite bulky and not as portable as handheld versions.



Whatever your magnification needs please get in touch and a member of our team will be happy to assist. We demonstrate, advise and sell a wide range of magnifiers.

**For more assistance call us on:**

**01604 719193**

# Anyone for Canasta?



If you enjoy the occasional game of cards why not join our canasta group?

The group was set up early last year by Margaret Mitchell, NAB's Community Support Worker in the north of the county. There are currently three regular players, Joan from Kettering and Lawrence and Yvonne from Corby who meet up every couple of weeks.

Yvonne had been playing Canasta for many years and taught the others the skills of the game. Now established, they'd like more players, from beginners upwards, to join them.

Canasta, for those who've never played it, is similar to rummy. It uses two packs of cards and is usually played by two pairs of partners with the aim of collecting sets (or melds) of cards.

"It's a very intriguing game and keeps your mind alert" says Lawrence. The three players have become good friends. Yvonne adds "Canasta is a great way to socialise."

**Anyone interested in joining the Corby Canasta Group can contact Community Support Worker for Corby: Margaret Mitchell on 07850 770785.**

## A Christmas Cracker for all

Our Volunteer Branches, Social Groups and Children and Families Service love nothing more than a good party or outing. So with Christmas fast approaching all enjoyed special festive celebrations during December.



## Visit to Agatha Christie Tribute



Matters of mystery were in store for a group from Kettering Sight Centre during a described tour at Kettering Museum.

A unique collection of memorabilia relating to the famous author and her life was on display and members of the group were even allowed to handle some of the exhibits. There were newspaper clippings detailing her famous disappearance and the collection's owner Gale Goddard kept

everyone enthralled with her knowledgeable commentary.

The visit began in the Blitz café – which is like stepping back in time to the 1940s, with staff dressed in period attire. The Museum opened up especially for the group and well-known crime writer and Radio 4 presenter Frances Fyfield was also there to talk about her own work.

For one Poirot fan Diane Dove, an NAB staff member, it was a memorable morning. "It was so interesting," she said "and really brought the books to life."

# Your unwanted items can help us to help others

**When you have unwanted items such as clothes, shoes, handbags, books and general bric-a-brac don't throw them out!**

Instead why not donate them to our Charity Shops in Kettering and Northampton and help us to make a difference to the lives of local people living with sight loss.

Our Charity Shops enable us to receive community support and raise much-needed funds for NAB.



We rely on a team of dedicated volunteers who generously give up their time to help with all aspects of running the shops.

**Last year our Charity Shops turned over £58,000.**

We receive a variety of good-quality items to suit all budgets. However to keep our shops full and entice repeat customers, **we are always appealing for more donations - so please help!**

# Drop-in and show your support

## Kettering Charity Shop



**We're Open:**

**9:30am-4pm  
Monday to Saturday**

33 Gold Street, Kettering  
NN16 8JB

Find us next to **Boots and Thomson.**

## Northampton Charity Shop

**We're Open:**

**9:30am-3:45pm  
Monday to Friday**

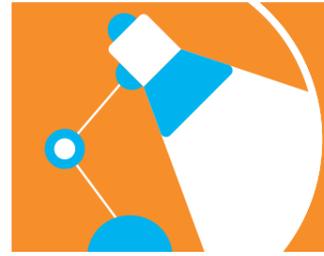
**10am-2pm  
Saturday**

297 Wellingborough Road,  
Northampton, NN1 4EW

Find us next to T&2  
Sugars opposite Co-op.



To all our past and present volunteers and supporters  
**THANK-YOU**



## SPOTLIGHT:

Volunteer Support Service

**Is your sight loss making it hard to read, keep up with correspondence, go shopping or get out and about on your own?**

**Well it doesn't have to, as our Volunteer Support Service may be able to find a volunteer to help you.**

NAB Volunteer Support Workers Jean Kinder and Rachel Cave recruit, train and match volunteers to befriend and assist visually impaired individuals who have requested more regular support.

### A perfect pairing

To arrange a successful "match" Jean and Rachel recognize the importance of common ground or interests. Both volunteers and the people they are visiting need to feel comfortable in each other's company and have plenty to talk about in order to develop a working friendship.

### Your local Volunteer Support Workers



Jean Kinder



Rachel Cave



**To find out more or request a volunteer, call our Helpline: 01604 719193**

For instance, well-travelled VIPs and visitors will have lots of memories to share, experiences to exchange, knowledge and views to air as will those with military connections, similar hobbies or local roots. Sometimes young and old get on famously too.

### We recruit volunteers from all walks of life

Our volunteers are a diverse group of people of all ages. Some are still in education or employment and some are retired.

Jean and Rachel recruit volunteers right around the county and work hard to make the pairings local. Once they identify a suitable volunteer they will organise an introduction. If both parties are happy, then the service begins and our Volunteer Support Workers keep in regular contact to ensure things are going well.

Befrienders may visit your home for a chat and a coffee, help with paperwork etc or assist with shopping or appointments etc.

# A sporting chance

**Getting active and out there has never been easier. Opportunities are really opening up at local and national levels for visually impaired people to take up sports and other recreational pursuits.**



And hot on the heels of last year's Rio Paralympics, when a number of visually impaired athletes featured in GB's successes, what better resolution could you make at the start of 2017?

Northamptonshire Sport is working hard to make sport, recreation and physical activity accessible, safe and inclusive for all – right across the county. It aims to extend opportunities and increase the numbers of disabled people taking part.

Among its new initiatives is the Guide Runner scheme which recruits volunteers to accompany blind and partially sighted runners at the weekly Park Runs.

Two visually impaired people have already participated in the Saturday runs on Northampton Racecourse. And with more trained Guide Runners now available to help, the hope is to extend the opportunity to park runs in other towns in the county.

Raunds has its very own "star" archer in double national champion Deb Wright, who shoots with the Pemberton Maid Marions.

Deb has been partially sighted since 2009 and in early 2015, feeling quite depressed and isolated, sought advice on staying active at a Health and Wellbeing event at Raunds library.

This led to having a go at archery and since then Deb has had great success and is currently British Blind Sports Indoor and Outdoor VI Open National Champion, setting new national records.

"I'd messed about a bit with archery before my sight failed," she explained. "But I never thought I'd be any good or that it would be so life-changing."



## Multi-sport Taster Day

Saturday 11th March 2017

10am – 3pm

Kingsthorpe Community College, Boughton Green Road, Northampton.

A free event for anyone with sight loss of any age to have a go at football, goalball, cricket and other sporting activities.

To find out more about this event or other opportunities contact NAB's Sports Ambassador **Hugh Spence** on **01604 719193** or **Northamptonshire Sport** on **01604 366976**.

# Steady as you go!

Winter's here and it's a good time to remind ourselves of the importance of staying warm, safe, healthy and active – especially as we get older!

Having a fall is one of the biggest health risks to older people. Did you know vision loss is also a major factor in falling. Loss of clarity and distinction, balance and judgement is difficult to deal with at the best of times. Add in the dull days and slippery surfaces that winter brings, and there could be an accident waiting to happen.

So it makes sense to check out any likely hazards around the home, make provision for the colder weather and generally take a little extra care of yourself.



If you've had a fall or think you could benefit from advice, contact Northamptonshire NHS Falls Service on: **01933 235870** or for general support, contact us on **01604 719193**

Here are a few simple tips that can help us all:

### 1 Have regular eye tests

Wear the right glasses and keep them clean.

### 2 Check your medicines

Take them as prescribed. Some can make you feel faint or affect balance. Let the GP know if this happens.

### 3 Have good lighting

Make sure your home is well lit (especially stairwells, hallways and landings).

### 4 Exercise regularly

To stay fit and active.

### 5 Eat a good balanced diet

With enough Vitamin D and calcium for bone strength.

### 6 Look after your feet

Attend to any foot problems and wear well-fitted shoes and slippers with rubber soles.

### 7 Remove home hazards

Keep walkways clear, take care with rugs.

### 8 Put bells on pet collars

So you know where they are.

John Hawkins of East Hunsbury has found the answer to his long-term need for better overhead lighting in his home. He's had three energy-saving LED light panels (more usually used in commercial buildings) installed in his lounge/dining room.

Registered Severely Sight Impaired, with macular degeneration, John says: "I've always needed a lot of light, so when we moved to our bungalow I sought the help of a recommended electrician. The panels give a cool white light without glare and I'm absolutely delighted."



# Technology Support

Getting “on line” or using modern technology might seem daunting when you have a seeing difficulty. But what a difference it can make to your life!

At NAB’s weekly Technology Support Clubs at Kettering and Northampton Sight Centres (previously known as our Computer Clubs) staff and able volunteers are introducing more and more visually impaired and blind people to the benefits of assistive technology and helping to improve their skills and confidence.

Carole is one of them. Despite working with computers in the past, she needed support to get going again for her personal use. Starting with basic computer skills and help to use magnification and speech software, Carole has thoroughly upped her knowledge.

However, with a love for travelling, she wanted something portable and acting on advice she now



owns a Samsung tablet. Switching to a tablet has given Carole the freedom she needed to use technology abroad. From taking photos on holiday and checking her emails, to catching up on her favourite gardening shows, there is no limit to what she is now able to do.

“I don’t know where I would be without my tablet. It’s become an invaluable part of my daily life,” she said. “I’m so glad I took the chance NAB offered me. It’s been an immense boost.”

# Knitting Matters

**Losing your sight doesn’t mean giving up on your hobbies, as three eager knitters from around the county are rightly proud to show.**

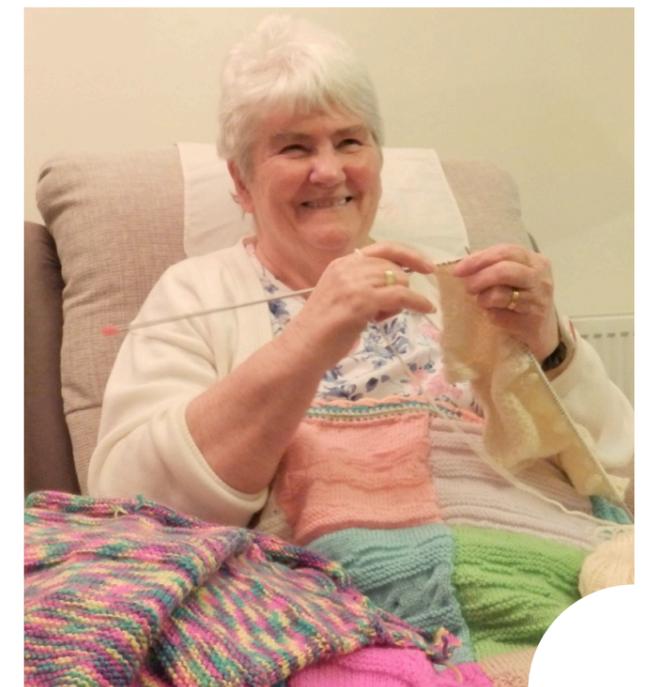
Patricia from Old Stratford, Barbara of Daventry and Margaret of Rothwell were all busy knitting for family and friends until their sight became severely affected by macular degeneration.

But all are made of stern stuff and, after initial doubts, picked up their pins again and carried on! Pat is still working with fine wool, using patterns she knows to produce squares for blankets and quilts. She still takes her knitting to a weekly craft group.

Margaret has made over 90 blankets since losing her sight which have been sent via her local Mothers’ Union to needy people including refugees around the globe.

Barbara knits scarves in an array of fluffy or multi-coloured wools and has recently given two carrier bags full to NAB for sale in our Kettering charity shop.

Pat sums up their determination: “I’d be lost without my knitting. It may not be up to my old Aran standards but it’s still useful and I get a lot of pleasure from it. I can feel what I’m doing and my sister will always pick up any odd dropped stitches!”



## Visit our Mobile Sight Centre in a town near you

		Day	Time	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun
Northampton Area	<b>Brixworth:</b> Brixworth Library, Spratton Road	Wed	11:30am-12:45pm					10	
	<b>Moulton Village Autos:</b> Stocks Hill	Wed	1:30pm-2:30pm					10	
	<b>Northampton Abington Street:</b> Close to Central Library	Fri	9:30am-1pm	27					
	<b>Northampton Abington Street:</b> Close to Central Library	Fri	9:30am-3pm		24	24	28	26	23
	<b>N'pton St Crispin Retirement Village:</b> Off St Crispin Drive, Duston	Wed	2pm-3:30pm		22			24	
South & West Northants Area	<b>Brackley Town Centre:</b> Piazza, Town Hall, Market Place	Wed	10am-12:30pm		1	1	5	3	7
	<b>Daventry Town Centre:</b> Near Shopmobility, New St	Wed	10am-1pm	25	22	22	26	24	28
	<b>Deanshanger:</b> Memorial Community Centre/Library	Wed	10:30am-12pm				19		
	<b>Long Buckby:</b> GP Surgery car park, Station Road	Wed	2pm-3pm				26		
	<b>Potterspury:</b> Outside Post Office, High Street	Wed	12:30pm-1:30pm				19		
	<b>Towcester:</b> Waitrose car park, Water Lane	Wed	1:30pm-3:30pm		1	1	5	3	7
Kettering, Corby & Oundle Area	<b>Burton Latimer:</b> Burton Latimer Library, High St	Wed	10am-11:45am				12		
	<b>Corby Town Centre:</b> Close to Corby Cube, George St	Fri	10am-1pm	20	17	17	21	19	16
	<b>Desborough Town Centre:</b> Co-op car park, Gladstone St	Wed	9:45am-11am					10	
	<b>Oundle Town Centre:</b> Co-op car park, St Osyths Lane	Wed	10am-1pm			8			
Wellingborough & Rushden Area	<b>Earls Barton:</b> Medical Centre car park, Aggate Way	Thu	1:45pm-3pm				13		
	<b>Irchester:</b> Irchester Working Men's Club car park	Wed	1:30pm-2:30pm		8				
	<b>Raunds Town Centre:</b> The Square car park, off High St	Wed	12:30pm-2:15pm				12		
	<b>Rushden Town Centre:</b> ExtraCare Imperial Court, Duck St	Wed	10:30am-12:30pm		8				
	<b>Wellingborough Town Centre:</b> Opposite Hind Hotel	Thu	10am-1pm	26	9,23	9,23	13,27	11,25	8,22

# Local to You – Social and Support Groups

Corby	Swan Gardens, Gainsborough Rd	2pm - 4pm 4th Tues of month
Long Buckby	Greenhill Court, Park Rd	11am -3pm 3rd Thurs of month
Northampton Luncheon	Delapre Community Centre, Alton St	12:45pm -3:30pm 3rd Tues of month
Northampton Pub Lunch	The Trumpet Pub, Wellingborough Rd	12pm -3pm 1st Tues of month
Wellingborough	Knights Court, Gold St	1:30pm – 3:30pm 3rd Thurs of month

Don't forget our local branches in Brackley, Kettering, Oundle, Rushden and Towcester run regular social groups & outings.



**LOTTERY FUNDED**

## Ways to donate:



Text  
**ISEE15 £2**  
to 70070



Go to: **JustGiving.com/nab**  
Where you can fundraise, donate  
once or set up monthly payments

## Contact us:

**Helpline: 01604 719193**

**Email:** [helpline@nab.org.uk](mailto:helpline@nab.org.uk)

**Website:** [www.nab.org.uk](http://www.nab.org.uk)

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