

The front cover of the magazine shows a photograph of Bob Hughes, Chief Executive of Sight for Surrey, holding our award crystal which is given to winners of The Queen’s Award for Voluntary Service. With Bob, is Cecilia Power, Chair of Trustees, holding the award letter alongside Vice Lord Lieutenant, Sir Stephen Lamport, who presented the award at our Volunteers Celebration event in September at Fetcham Park House.

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Welcome to the Winter 2022/23 edition of Signpost

A photograph shows Bob Hughes, Chief Executive of Sight for Surrey, standing next to the Centenary Braille plaque outside the offices of Sight for Surrey, Fetcham.

Happy Retirement Bob

After nearly 10 years, Bob Hughes, is retiring as Chief Executive. The charity has flourished under his leadership, and Signpost caught up with him about some of the changes brought in during his tenure.

“We had, and still do have, excellent skilled staff, and my first job was to understand what I needed to do to continue doing our services well. Firstly, I introduced the Helpdesk, so there was a central point for all calls. The Helpdesk then triaged each call to the appropriate person or team.

I then created the Children & Young People’s Service (CYPS) team bringing together the recreational programme and habilitation services. Our service is now regarded as a national exemplar in the industry which I am extremely proud of.

Changes to our Adult Services Team enabled the development of Rehabilitation Support Workers who now largely underpin our professional rehabilitation work. Across the specialist professional services we provide, Vision Impaired Rehabilitation Workers, Social Workers for the Deaf and Children & Young People’s Habilitation Specialists, we are investing significant sums to grow our own professional teams.

We didn't have anyone leading fundraising so I put a case forward to recruit a lead to develop the team. Even during the pandemic, when all face-to-face events were cancelled, the team was still raising money by refocusing their efforts on new income streams.

Bob concludes, "In 2016 Surrey County Council awarded us the multi-sensory contract for adult services for the first time, and again in 2021, including an inflation measure, and I feel confident I am leaving Sight for Surrey in a strong position to move forward. I am going to miss this place very much."

We wish Bob all the very best in his retirement.

How to contact us

This edition of Signpost has been sent to you as someone who requested information from us. If you would like Signpost in a different format, please let us know. If you'd rather not receive our magazine, you can unsubscribe by emailing gdpr@sightforsurrey.org.uk or contacting our Helpdesk on 01372 377701.

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Cost of Living Crisis

The cost of living crisis is a hot topic and encompasses utilities and services we rely on including heating, electricity, food and petrol.

One of the biggest concerns at Sight for Surrey is people cutting corners with regards to lighting in a bid to save money, as this puts themselves at greater risk from a fall or other injury.

Good lighting is imperative in helping anyone to see things better around them, that includes people with a vision impairment and or hearing loss. But with the rising costs of electricity, is there going to be a lean towards turning lights off and therefore putting themselves in danger?

It is important to reassure everyone that light bulbs are a small energy cost, there are other electrical items which cost us more to use, like leaving the TV on standby.

Good lighting helps individuals by illuminating areas of risk, such as steps and stairs, and aids tasks such as chopping vegetables, as well as making many other everyday activities more accessible. People who are Deaf or hard of hearing need good levels of lighting to help them lip read and see signing clearly.

Top tips for good lighting in the home:

- Have high and even ambient lighting throughout your home. Even levels of lighting mean that people's eyes do not need to readjust to different levels of light when they stop an activity, move away from it or move into a different room
- Good lighting near the top and bottom of stairs is especially important to help avoid falls
- Be adjustable! Have dimming switches in rooms that you require higher levels of light in i.e. the kitchen
- Consider additional lighting like floor lamps and task lamps around high use areas
- Change your fluorescent light bulbs for LED, which are more energy efficient and economical.

The Sight for Surrey Resource Centre stocks a variety of lamps and lights; if you are eligible, many are free. Please do contact us to discuss options.

Call **01372 377701** or email info@sightforsurrey.org.uk. SMS: **07860 026 269**

Community Fridges

Community Fridges are hubs where supermarkets, shops and individuals donate surplus food items, and you can visit and take what you need for free. A small selection are listed below but there are many more around the county.

- Englefield Green Community Fridge, The Village Centre, Victoria Street, Englefield Green, TW20 0QX
- Guildford Community Fridge, The Hive, Park Barn Drive, Guildford, GU2 8EN
- Knaphill Community Fridge, Holy Trinity Church, Chobham Road, Knaphill, Woking, GU21 2SX
- Hale Community Fridge & Cupboard, Hale Community Centre, 130 Upper Hale Road, Farnham, GU9 0JH
- Horley Community Fridge,
- The Meeting Place: Bookham Baptist Church, Lower Road, Bookham, KT23 4DH; The Grange, Rectory Lane, Bookham, KT23 4DZ and St. Mary's Church, 10A The Ridgeway, Fetcham, KT22 9AZ
- Talking Tree Community Fridge, 91 High Street, Staines, TW18 4PQ
- Dorking Community Fridge, Dorking Christian Centre, Church Street, Dorking, RH4 1DW

999 BSL

Sensory Services by Sight for Surrey celebrated the launch of **999 BSL** with a party for the Surrey Deaf community. 999 BSL is the UK's first ever Video Relay Service (VRS) connecting Deaf people to the emergency services (police, ambulance, fire and coastguard) via a remote British Sign Language (BSL) interpreter. Standing alongside Sight for Surrey were Surrey Police, Surrey Fire & Rescue & South East Coast Ambulance Service showcasing the new service and answering any questions the local Deaf community have about downloading and using the app.

The new service, provided by interpreting and communication support provider, Sign Language Interactions, is available as an iOS and Android app and web-based platform. The service is completely free of charge to Deaf users, and is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year.

Susanna MacDonald from Sight for Surrey said, “999 BSL will make a huge difference for the Deaf community and how quickly we can connect to the emergency services rather than waiting for the next hearing person to come along, especially when the situation is life-threatening. To be able to call directly and explain and communicate in our first language is fantastic and it also means full and accurate information can be translated. This is really great news.”

Christmas Opening Hours

If you need to contact us over the festive season, our Christmas opening hours are as follows:

Friday 23rd December - 9am to 5pm
Monday 26th December - Office closed
Tuesday 27th December - Office closed
Wednesday 28th December - 9am to 5pm
Thursday 29th December - 9am to 5pm
Friday 30th December - 9am to 5pm
Monday 2nd January 2023 - Office closed

Christmas Carol Concert & Raffle

Please join us for some Yuletide cheer at our fully BSL interpreted and accessible Centenary Christmas Carol concert at St. Andrew’s Church, Cobham on Tuesday 6th December from 7pm. A blend of traditional and modern Christmas carols will be sung at the candlelit concert. A special Sight for Surrey song, penned by local musician, Will Todd, will be sung by members of our Children’s Team who are vision impaired.

Complimentary mulled wine and mince pies will be served at the end of the service and tickets for our Christmas raffle will be available to buy.

To book your tickets visit our website www.sightforsurrey.org.uk or email fundraising@sightforsurrey.org.uk for more details.

Christmas Raffle tickets are enclosed in your issue of Signpost, a book costs £10. First prize is £250! Please help us sell lots of tickets to your family and

friends to help raise money for us. Additional books can be sent out to you free of charge. To order more books call 01372 377701 or email fundraising@sightforsurrey.org.uk.

Cricket Fun Day

On Sunday 18th September we held our first vision impaired and Deaf Cricket Fun Day at Oxted & Limpsfield Cricket Club which raised over £500 for the charity. The day started off with the opportunity to try batting and bowling using specialist vision impaired cricket equipment. We also had our sight loss simulation specs out, so sighted people could experience an emulated version of eye conditions like Glaucoma and Retinitis Pigmentosa, whilst playing.

BBC News reader, Nicholas Owen, came down to show his support, and had a go at hitting the ball whilst wearing simulation specs.

Then the England Cricket Association for the Deaf took on Oxted & Limpsfield. It was a competitive match but in the end, Oxted & Limpsfield came out victorious.

Thank you to UK Deaf Sport for their funding to help make this event happen.

Deaf Coffee Dates for 2023

Come and join us at our Deaf Coffee dates in 2023 for a cuppa , or tea, and a catch up.

- Redhill: 10am to 1pm (The Harlequins Theatre Café); 1st Tuesday of the month
- Woking: 2pm to 5pm (Pret A Manger); Every 3rd Thursday of the month

Dates and locations may be subject to change so please visit www.sightforsurrey.org.uk/get-help/deaf/tea-coffee-gatherings for the latest information or visit our Facebook page @DeafServicesTeam.

Christine Wilmshurst appointed new Chair of Trustees

Welcome to our new Chair of Trustees, Christine Wilmshurst. Christine has been on the board of trustees for just over 5 years and brings a wealth of experience in Marketing, Fundraising and Business Development having worked for consumer goods giant, Proctor & Gamble.

Christine said, "I am honoured to be given the opportunity to serve as the new Chair of Sight for Surrey. I will ensure that we fulfil our mission and continue to deliver first class services to blind, vision impaired, Deaf, deafblind and hard of hearing people across the county."

At the same time as Christine's new appointment, we also welcome four new trustees: Beth Halliday, Ben Green, David Liversidge and Steve Plowman.

Beth Halliday's daughter, Rowan, is vision impaired and has been supported by the charity for many years. David is an IT and user experience expert and was supported by Sight for Surrey last year. Ben Green is a finance expert and has family experience of vision impairment.

Steve Plowman has a combined sight and hearing loss and has been supported by the charity for many years and is a regular volunteer at many of our fundraising events.

All bring a wealth of expertise and experience with them and we look forward to the new team helping steer the charity forward. Thank you to Cecilia Power for the 10 years she gave to the charity as the previous Chair of Trustees and we wish her well in her retirement.

Please don't stop the music!

The beautiful backdrop of Hatchlands Park House, East Clandon was the venue for Music in the Park, the magical musical fundraiser in aid of Sight for Surrey organised by the Guildford Lions. For £25 a ticket, guests were treated to an evening of live music whilst dining on sumptuous picnics in the grounds of Hatchlands. Guests jived to Elvis' *Blue Suede Shoes*, sat in stunned silence to a stunning solo of James Bond theme tune, *Skyfall*, rocked to the Rolling Stones,

Paint it Black and bopped to the Beatles, *I Saw Her Standing There*, amongst many other tunes. Sight for Surrey did a roaring trade on raffle tickets and spoke to many people about the support we provide. The event raised a whopping £7,813. Keep up to date with all our latest news and events through our e-newsletter, sign-up is via our website www.sightforsurrey.org.uk.

We have had a very busy summer attending many fundraising events including a charity golf day at West Byfleet Golf Club, the Donkey Derby at Polesden Lacey and the Shere Hill Climb. We have also had people taking on Centenary Challenge events for us, including Ride London-Essex, the Virtual London Marathon and the Royal Parks Half Marathon.

If you would like to take part in a cycling, running, swimming or other challenge event and fundraise for us then we would love to hear from you, please contact our fundraising team on fundrasing@sightforsurrey.org.uk.

Centenary Steampunk Artwork

Our Deafblind Friendship Group wanted to celebrate our Centenary in a unique way. The group are very artistic and have been going for around 20 years having had nearly 90 members over the years. Led by Julie Barclay, the group discussed and agreed on a series of Steampunk inspired artwork, which depict Sight for Surrey over the last 100 years. The group created nine pieces altogether.

Steampunk incorporates lots of tactile materials from different periods of history, often with a science fiction twist.

Mary Cree, aged 100, created the first piece, entitled the 'Friendship Group'.

'The End of the First World War' was made by Debbie Arnaud, who has Usher Syndrome, and has always enjoyed any forms of art.

'The End of the Second World War' was designed by local artist Dick Eborn, who was born deafblind and represents the end of World War II.

Our deafblind Trustee, Russell Gilmore, and his wife, Anne, also deafblind, created three pieces between them, both putting hands in their picture to represent their first language.

Members are supported at the group on an individual basis, using the most appropriate communication for example, clear speech, deafblind finger spelling, hands on signing, as well as close-up British Sign Language and meeting individual mobility needs. If you know of someone that would like to join our group please contact our Helpdesk on 01372 377701 or email info@sightforsurrey.org.uk.

Sight for Surrey receives The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service!

Sight for Surrey has been awarded The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service and were presented with the award crystal and certificate by Vice Lord Lieutenant, Sir Stephen Lamport, at our annual volunteer celebration event.

The award is the highest accolade a voluntary group can receive in the UK and is equivalent to an MBE! Our award recognises the help and support Sight for Surrey's army of volunteers provides to people in Surrey who are blind, vision impaired, Deaf, deafblind and hard of hearing.

Bob Hughes, Chief Executive for Sight for Surrey, said, "We have always provided a range of services delivered by volunteers, and we know how this support helps people on a practical and emotional level. The range of support they deliver is enormous: from volunteer drivers, phone befrienders and providing equipment support to individuals - including setting up a computer with Zoom so a vision impaired lady could attend a family funeral in Australia, through to enabling a hard of hearing gentleman to have conversations with his friends and family on an amplified telephone we supplied. We are blessed with an army of thoughtful, kind and resourceful volunteers who go the extra mile and make our service that extra bit special." Interested in being a volunteer? Please email volunteering@sightforsurrey.org.uk.

More volunteer award winners!

Two of our volunteers have been successful in Reigate & Banstead's Volunteer Awards. Mary Da-Silva-Skinner won Individual Trustee and David Parsons, Individual Volunteer. Congratulations to you both!

Golf Champion!

Seven years ago after a routine eye check, Jason (Jay) Bastable's world was turned upside down with a diagnosis of advanced Glaucoma. He could no longer continue working as a butcher, drive his car or afford his rent. His Ophthalmologist suggested contacting Sight for Surrey for help and support. Jay was guided through the process of applying for housing, disability benefit, PIP, and provided with cane training by Sight for Surrey which he said was "invaluable and life changing."

"I found the first year of adjustment incredibly hard. I had gone from an independent, hard-working man to being stuck at home. I started slipping into bad habits until my brother took me down to the driving range, I loved it! A few weeks later he took me back and this time a golf pro came over and gave me some advice and it all clicked into place!

My nephews started taking me to the range, I bought myself a half set of clubs and completed my first 9-hole course, I was hooked!

My Sight for Surrey support worker then gave me details of England & Wales Blind Golf, so I registered with them and was invited along to attend a taster weekend. Since then I haven't looked back, in 2018 I won the Blind Golf World Championship and I am looking forward to competing in the Championships again in March 2023 in South Africa."

Jay is also Captain of England & Wales Blind Golf and led the team to victory over the summer in the Auld Enemies Cup. To find out more visit www.ewblindgolf.co.uk or email enquiries.blindgolf@gmail.com.

CYPS Residential Weekend at Juniper Hall

The Children & Young People's Service (CYPS) Residential weekend away for vision impaired children and their families took place at Juniper Hall Field Centre near Dorking over the summer. It was a glorious sunny weekend, with an itinerary that ensured an action packed time for all 34 attendees.

When the families arrived they spent a few hours familiarising themselves with the layout of the field centre house and grounds, which is important for anyone with a vision impairment. This was followed by dinner and games and allowed everyone get to know each other.

Saturday started with a good hearty breakfast to keep everyone going. The 11UP group then headed over to Walton Firs Activity Centre in Cobham for a morning of high ropes climbing. Obstacles including the 'Leap of Faith' and 'Gladiators Climb' had to be accomplished all high in the sky!

At the same time, the younger participants, and their families, travelled to Box Hill for a walk, and to use the natural play area. The children scaled trees, balanced on wood beams, climbed a fort, got extremely dirty and had lots of fun! Everyone gathered back at Juniper Hall for lunch and a rest before the afternoon's activities commenced.

Arts and crafts were the order of the afternoon including messy slime making, and each child got the opportunity to make their own bug box to take home. The parts were pre-cut by a volunteer but the children drilled and glued all the elements together. A giant bug hotel was also created in the grounds of Juniper Hall. Children and parents had to gather sticks, moss, leaves and branches and stuff the elements into old pallets that were stacked up to create an inviting home for all the local bugs.

After dinner a campfire sing song and toasting of marshmallows brought everyone together. The children were also invited to bring an item to add to our 'Centenary Time Capsule'. The capsule was handmade by Cranleigh Men's Shed. The night then concluded with karaoke!

On Sunday morning everyone participated in a treasure hunt with handmade tactile maps. That afternoon the group got together for one last activity of pizza making. Everyone enjoyed throwing and slamming the pizza dough onto the table to create the base. A tomato layer was then added followed by lots of tasty toppings. Using their sense of smell everyone then identified and picked herbs from the gardens of Juniper Hall to crown their masterpieces. The pizzas were then cooked and devoured for lunch. This activity brought the weekend to a close, which would not have been possible without the funding and support from The Chapman Charitable Trust, Alpkit Foundation, Arnold Clark Community Fund, Surrey Short Breaks and The Openwork Foundation, so a big thank you to them all. There were many sleepy heads leaving on Sunday destined for a quiet afternoon on the sofa!

Andy Cook retires and Tony takes over

After over 26 years working at Sight for Surrey, Andy Cook, Resource Centre Manager, has retired. His successor, Tony Greene, has been working at Sight for Surrey for over nine years, and has worked across a variety of roles at the charity. He first joined as a support worker, then moved onto the Helpdesk. Tony also drove our Hearing & Sight Loss equipment bus all over Surrey. His most recent role was as a Hearing Loss Advisor, before he was appointed Resource Centre Co-ordinator.

Tony said, "I am delighted with my new appointment, although taking over from Andy after 26 years are big boots to fill! The Resource Centre is still an Aladdin's cave of gadgets and devices to help make living with sight or hearing loss easier, and I look forward to welcoming our service users into the offices in Fetcham to help them find the equipment they need".

Maralyn Foote remains the Resource Centre Assistant! **To book an appointment at the Resource Centre please call our Helpdesk on 01372 377701**

2023 Diaries

The 2023 diaries are in, so don't delay and order yours today. The large print diaries are ideal for anyone with a vision impairment, as the yellow on black provides a great contrast. They are available as an A3 wall calendar, A4 & A5 desk diary and a small pocket size. To order your diary please call our Helpdesk on 01372 377701.

Rehabilitation Support

Being a Rehabilitation Support Worker (RSW) at Sight for Surrey is a varied role and one that Kamila loves. Recently she supported Mr Roberts after Mrs Roberts made a referral, via www.sightforsurrey.uk, for her husband, who had sight loss as well as Parkinson's disease.

The Benefits Team helped Mrs Roberts apply for Attendance Allowance. This helps with extra costs if you have a disability that requires someone to help look after you. There are other benefits we can help you apply for so do contact our Benefits Team to find out more.

Kamila then assessed Mr Roberts and recommended other services including an OT assessment, Talking Books and a Sight for Surrey Befriender, so they both had someone to talk to.

Sadly Mr Roberts died in June, but as a way of saying thank you for all the help and support they received, Mrs Roberts requested donations to Sight for Surrey in lieu of flowers at her husband's funeral.

Mrs Roberts said, "everyone at Sight for Surrey was kind, thoughtful and caring. Donations in lieu of flowers was our way of giving something back".

This is one of the many ways you can support Sight for Surrey as well as leaving a gift to us in your will. Sight for Surrey has a free will writing service with will experts, Guardian Angel, worth over £90.

The online service is easy to use, once you have completed your will it will be checked by a Guardian Angel expert. Visit www.gawill.uk/sfs and use the code **SFS-FREE** at checkout, or call Guardian Angel on 0800 773 4014.

Donations & thank you's

Thank you to all the trusts, companies, schools and clubs that have supported us with grants, funding and fundraising initiatives including:

- Walton Charity – ECLO and Hearing Loss
- Woking Borough Council – ECLO and Hearing Loss
- Tesco Bags of Help – ECLO
- Toyota Community Fund – ECLO
- Elmbridge Annual Fund – CYPS Counselling and Christmas Carol Concert Interpreter
- Tesco Community Grant – CYPS Counselling
- National Lottery - to support a wide range of our services over the next three years
- Vision Foundation
- Woking District Rotary Club
- Guildford Lions
- Leatherhead Lions
- UK Deaf Sport
- Caterham, Oxted & Godstone Lions
- Woking High School, VI department

Hear Here clinics up and running!

The **Hear Here** project supports people across Surrey with hearing loss. The Guildford Diocese are working to bring these clinics back after the project was put on hold over lockdown and have employed a Lead Programme Co-ordinator to do this. They provide walk-in clinics offering hearing aid repairs, including battery and tube changes. They plan to grow and develop these essential clinics, and Sight for Surrey are pleased to be in partnership with this programme, working with the fantastic teams and communities who have made the project the success it is so far. For further information visit www.cofeguildford.org.uk.

Getting out and about

Our Sight for Surrey, Coffee, Cake & Celebrate events during 2022 have been a great success! It has been wonderful to have the opportunity to meet so many people at these events during our Centenary year and answer lots of sight and hearing loss questions and queries.

A big thank you to all the Sight for Surrey staff, volunteers and service users who supported these events in Caterham, Staines, Godalming and Woking. Dates for 2023 are in the pipeline, so to ensure you receive the list of dates for 2023, and all our latest news, please sign-up for our e-newsletter via our website www.sightforsurrey.org.uk and join our social media platforms, Facebook, Instagram & Twitter.

Advert

The advert on the back of the magazine shows an image of the new Amigo 8. It's High Definition, lightweight and portable!

The Amigo 8 makes undetectable text visible again with the help of Dynamic Contrast, a proprietary feature that enhances the contrast of similar colours and provides sharper, clearer, and more defined images. View enlarged images on a generous 8-inch widescreen LCD display, offering a large viewing area.

Lightweight and easy to use, simply place it directly on your reading material, or hold it up to view objects at a distance. Adjust magnification and contrast with an easy press of a button. Read prices, magazines, Christmas cards, newspapers, cooking instructions, tags, menus, labels, street signs and more anywhere!

Xmas special price: £795.00

Normal retail price: £895.00

Call 0800 145 6115 for more information