

MyVision Oxfordshire

Supporting Visually Impaired People

Autumn 2024



AGM, Upcoming Events, Children and Young People Update, and much more!

MyVision Oxfordshire

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Upcoming Events

Oxford University Museum

Touch Tours

- Botanical Gardens Visit:** 12th September
- Museum of Natural History Minerals Exhibit:** 10th October
- Multaka at the Pitt Rivers Museum:** 14th November

ActivEyes Events

- ActivEyes Pub Social:** 19th September, 17th October, 21st November
- Visually Impaired Tennis:** 26th September, 24th October, 28th November
- CyclAbility Cycling (formerly Wheels for All Cycling):** Tuesdays and Fridays

In the Community

- Faringdon Audio Described Cinema:** 22nd August
- Glasswalk Challenge:** 15th September
- AGM:** 18th September
- Chipping Norton Get Connected Session:** 19th September
- Thame Lawn Bowling:** 21st September
- Older People's Day:** 1st October
- Banbury VisionZone Tech Event:** 3rd October
- Carterton Get Connected Session:** 16th October

Children and Young People

- Abingdon Park Meet-Up:** 26th August
- Blenheim Parks Meet-Up:** 30th August

A message from Mark, our CEO

This July marked my 10-year anniversary at MyVision Oxfordshire – where has that time gone?! A lot has happened in 10 years, both in the world around us and with MyVision Oxfordshire, but I won't turn this into my memoirs (quite a boring read that'd be!)

I'm so thankful to be part of such an incredible team, one that continues to grow, learn, develop, and challenge each other to provide great support for blind and visually impaired people in the county.

On the one hand, a lot has changed in 10 years at MyVision and on the other, nothing has changed – we're still here to provide support, encouragement, and guidance to ensure you can live independent and active lives.

One upcoming change, which we've known about for a while is that we're saying goodbye to Arty Zalutskiy, who for the best

part of two years has produced this very newsletter, provided all our social media content and updated our website and leaflets. Arty is moving back to his home in Canada and embarking on new adventures – thank you Arty for all you have done to support us.

I hope to see some of you at our AGM in September, this year at the Rose Hill Community Centre. We'll be looking back on the last year and celebrating some of the incredible work that's taken place and hearing from some of the people who have been supported.

If I don't see you there, hopefully I'll see you at one of our many activities coming up over the next few months.

Mark



Volunteer Update

.....
by Katie Foulk

The first week of June was Volunteers' Week and in celebration we held a Tea-Party at Bradbury Lodge. It was a wonderful occasion for our volunteers to meet each other, chat about their various roles, and enjoy some tea and cake! We are so grateful for all our incredible volunteers; they are the backbone of MyVision and many of our services wouldn't happen without them.

Volunteering not only helps to improve our clients' wellbeing but also benefits our volunteers. Our volunteer Liz said, **"being a volunteer is fun and rewarding. It has really improved my mental health and being with someone whose needs are specific is a great privilege."**

It can also lead to new experiences and friendships, as Phillipa said **"I was a little apprehensive at first as I had never spent time with someone who was visually**

impaired, but I soon realised there was no need to feel nervous. I have been visiting my client for the past few months and really enjoy our chats and value the friendship we've established."

We are always grateful to welcome new volunteers to the team, so whether you are interested in befriending, supporting people with technology, helping at social groups, or would like to fundraise, we would love to hear from you.

You can contact us by either calling, visiting our website, or emailing **volunteer@myvision.org.uk**.



6 volunteers during a 'thank you' event

AGM 2024

The Chair and Trustees invite you to the Annual General Meeting of MyVision Oxfordshire on **18th September** from 10:30am - 12:00pm at the Rose Hill Community Centre, Carole's Way, Oxford OX4 4HF.

Nominations for trustees must be made by a member by 28th August. The event will be recorded for those who cannot attend in person.

If you would like an audio or electronic version of our accounts ahead to the meeting, please contact us on **01865 725595** or email **info@MyVision.org.uk**. You can also find our accounts online at **www.MyVision.org.uk/about-us/annual-accounts**. These will be available two weeks prior to the meeting.

At the meeting, there will be a vote to adopt proposed changes to our governing document (Articles of Association). These changes are mainly technical and involve modernising the document. They will not impact MyVision's work with Visually Impaired People in Oxfordshire.

The main changes are:

- Modernising the wording of the Objects (ie the purpose) of the organisation.
- Increasing the limit on the number of Trustees to 12.
- Setting term limits for Trustees.

There is parking in the area and the community centre can also be reached by the #3 bus from Oxford city centre. There will be MyVision team members to greet you and guide you upon arrival. If you have any questions regarding travel or the event, please don't hesitate to contact us.

We are excited to showcase our work over the year and introduce those we have supported in this time.

Please RSVP by Monday **16th September**.

Susan: Adjusting to Sight Loss Through Green Walks

.....
Susan has Myopia and has lost sight completely in one of her eyes. She was registered as 'partially sighted' by the John Radcliffe Hospital in 2020, who then referred Susan to our charity.

"I lost confidence in doing things on my own," said Susan. Since her diagnosis she has been on a path of slowly trying to regain her confidence.

Susan's first interaction with MyVision Oxfordshire was when she came along to our Wantage Information Day last August. She met Devante, our Community Engagement Worker, who talked to her about MyVision's services, and our social groups in particular.

Susan then joined our new Didcot Green Walks Social Group, a group that we formed after a report by Natural England showed that people with visual impairments and other

disabilities did not access or were unable to access green and blue spaces for recreational purposes. The objective of the group was to find out about what obstacles were in the way of people accessing green spaces and how we can overcome them.

"Being part of the Green Walks group has been very beneficial," said Susan. "I have gained confidence, and I now feel more comfortable leaving the house on my own."

Susan described that before being involved in our group she did not feel as independent and was very hesitant to leave the house on her own, relying more and more on her husband.

Susan doing some knitting



The group helped Susan to get more practice navigating outside, and socialising with other visually impaired people helped her feel more confident.

“One of the most beneficial things for me has been talking with other people. Even though we all have sight loss, everyone has had very different experiences, and it has been very beneficial to hear different people’s perspectives.”

“Sighted people try to understand visual impairment, but they don’t know exactly what it’s like. In the MyVision group everyone has sight loss and therefore everyone understands what you are going through.”

Susan explained that she also found the Green Walks very helpful as they have given her a chance to go for walks outside in a quiet area, free of traffic and the city bustle; she finds the green areas very enjoyable to walk around in and since joining the group she feels that she has got a lot more exercise.

Susan described MyVision as “a really helpful charity that helps people with visual impairment in a variety of ways.”

She then said, “In addition to joining the Walking Group, I have now also received counselling, and technology support and it amazes me that so many people in the charity also have sight loss, which allows them to understand what I’m going through on a personal level.”

We have Green Walks Social Groups that meet regularly in Didcot, East Oxford, and Abingdon, and we are hoping to launch groups in Banbury and Witney in the near future.

If you are interested in joining, or would like to know more, please contact us at info@MyVision.org.uk or 01865 725595.

Would you like receive more regular updates?

scan the QR code to sign up to our e-newsletter



Children and Young People Update

.....
by Faye O'Hara

The May half term was a good start to the summer activities with an Art Day and a Clip n' Climb Event. Both were a huge success with great outcomes for our families and children.

The art day produced some tactile tiles that will be put up outside of Bradbury Lodge. The concrete tiles were produced by creating a handprint and decorating it with our names and mosaic. It was great to get to speak with everyone involved and come up with ideas about what activities we would love to participate in next time.



one of the handprint art pieces our group made

Clip n' Climb was an exciting event with various ages attending. Everyone was quick to find their feet and head up the walls. There was lots of support for one another and everyone pushed their limits; even Jamie (our Technology and Equipment Officer) was there to help and encourage for our attendees. Turns out he's a resident spiderman and was racing up the walls with our young adults!



2 people wall climbing

There will be many more fun events coming soon.

Stay tuned for upcoming events.

Introducing Simon

Simon is our newest trustee. He has lifelong lived experience of visual impairment and currently works for Elsevier leading the company's content accessibility efforts. He is an active campaigner for disability inclusion and has volunteered for numerous charities in Oxfordshire.

Simon Holt



Introducing Sammy

Sammy is our new Community Engagement Worker for West Oxfordshire and Cherwell. She will be working to ensure strong community building across the county. As someone with lived experience of visual impairment, Sammy is passionate about delivering services and solutions to the larger visually impaired community.

Sammy Musani



Oxfordshire Goalball Club

Established in mid-2023 with help from MyVision Oxfordshire, the Oxfordshire Goalball Club had an amazingly successful first season. The club now has a permanent training venue in Abingdon, and is open to new members aged 10-99 of any ability. As a team sport uniquely suited to visually impaired players, goalball offers opportunities for developing physical fitness, communication, and orientation skills, as well as fun and camaraderie. If you're interested in finding out more or would like to join the club, email goalball.oxford@gmail.com

Farmoor Walk 2024

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28th September, 2023, 10:30am - 1:30pm

Join us for a walk around beautiful Farmoor Reservoir. There are several options for a walk; 1.2 miles, 1.7 miles, 2.4 miles, 4.1 miles or you could set your own challenge by doubling any of the routes. This is a social event but if you would like to make your walk a sponsored challenge, please let us know and we will be delighted to support you with this. To sign up, contact us at **fundraising@MyVision.org.uk** or **01865 725595**.



A group of people from last year's Farmoor Walk

Raffle Update

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Thank you to everyone who participated in our Summer Raffle. Thanks to your support we raised £2,527. These funds will make a huge difference for visually impaired people in the county.

We would like to thank our volunteer Jo Bagwell for taking on the Walk The Wight Challenge and Fundraising Manager, Joanna Waton for doing the Goring Gap Walk to raise money for our charity.

If you have a great fundraising idea of your own, please get in touch at **fundraising@MyVision.org.uk** or 01865 725 595

We are honoured to be one of 3 charities chosen by Councillor Alison Rooke, new Chair of Oxfordshire County Council, to be supported throughout the year.

The money and awareness generated will go a long way towards supporting visually impaired people throughout Oxfordshire.

Thank you to our ASDA bucket collection day volunteers!

Thank you to everyone who joined us at ASDA Wheatley on 6th July for our bucket collection. We greatly appreciate the time and effort you put in to help us raise some much needed funds. With your help we were able to raise £245.35, all of which will go towards supporting visually impaired people in Oxfordshire.

Social Group Schedule

- **Abingdon:** 30th September, 28th October, 25th November
- **Abingdon Walking Group:** 9th September, 30th September, 14th October, 28th October
- **Banbury:** 5th September, 4th October, 7th November
- **East Oxford Walking Group:** 22nd August, 26th September, 24th October
- **Didcot:** 11th September, 9th October, 13th November
- **Didcot Walking Group:** 13th September, 26th September, 11th October, 31st October,
- **Didcot Well-Being Course:** 3rd September, 1st October,
- **Didcot Audiobook Club:** 2nd October, 4th December
- **Headington:** 13th September, 11th October, 8th November
- **Henley:** 27th August, 24th September, 29th October, 26th November
- **Faringdon:** 4th September, 2nd October, 6th November
- **North Oxford:** 5th September, 3rd October, 7th November
- **Thame:** 5th September, 19th September, 3rd October, 17th October, 31st October, 14th November
- **Wallingford:** 16th September, 21st October, 18th November
- **Wheatley:** 5th September, 3rd October, 7th November
- **Wantage:** 18th September, 16th October, 20th November



Our Green Walks Group walking along a park path

VisionZone 2024

Solutions for Low Vision



Would you like to find out more about assistive technology, Support, Services, Groups and much more!

Our Vision Zone events bring together a variety of excellent services and charities covering your local area.

No matter what your sight loss condition we are here for you. Whether it's just to gain knowledge or hands on experience of new technologies, entry is free to our events, and our friendly staff will greet you with a warm welcome.

Thursday 3rd October – 10am to 2pm

Mill Arts Centre, Spiceball Park, Banbury, OX16 2PA



0800 1456115

www.lowvisionshop.co.uk