

**EAST SUFFOLK ASSOCIATION  
FOR THE BLIND**

**NEWSLETTER**

---

**ISSUE 49      SUMMER 2018**

---



**EAST SUFFOLK ASSOCIATION FOR THE BLIND**  
Registered Charity No. 206886

Mallard House Business Centre, The Old Station,  
Little Bealings, Woodbridge, Suffolk, IP13 6LT.  
Telephone: (01473) 611011    Email: [info@esab.org.uk](mailto:info@esab.org.uk)  
Website: [www.esab.org.uk](http://www.esab.org.uk)

## **NOTICE OF OUR ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

The Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the East Suffolk Association for the Blind is to be held at the Woodbridge Town Football Club, Friday 6th July starting at 10.30am.

Please note any items to be discussed under Any Other Business must be notified in writing to the ESAB head office at least four weeks prior to the date of the AGM.

At the time of writing, one item of Any Other Business has been submitted by the Trustee Board. This item concerns the implementation of the decision taken at last year's AGM to convert ESAB from being an unincorporated charity to a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO). The new CIO has now been created and to complete the conversion we now require to formally transfer assets from the old to the new organisation and dissolve the old organisation. To achieve this in compliance with article ten of the ESAB constitution the resolution below has to be agreed.

The resolution to be voted upon is:

- That, subject to any necessary consents from the Charity Commission, East Suffolk Association for the Blind, registered charity number 206886 (the Association), on a date and at time agreed upon by its trustees to meet operational needs, transfers to East Suffolk Association for the Blind Charitable Incorporated Organisation, registered charity number 1173918 (the CIO), all of the Association's property, equipment, investments, cash, intellectual property and other rights and entitlements, goodwill, contracts, debts and other assets together with its employees (together the Undertaking) in consideration for the CIO meeting, paying and discharging all liabilities and other obligations of the Association; and
  - That once the transfer of the Undertaking to the CIO is complete, the Association be dissolved.
-

## GEOFF MOSS MAKES GENEROUS DONATION TO ESAB



Geoff Moss one of our members who lives in Woodbridge, was kind enough on the milestone of his eightieth birthday to nominate East Suffolk Blind as the beneficiary of any gifts his friends and family wished to donate at the celebratory party that was attended by many family and friends. This raised the tremendous sum of £880 which Geoff decided would support both the local Woodbridge District Group of which he is an active member as well as be used to provide daily living aids for ESAB members. This was an extremely generous gesture for which both the Woodbridge Committee and the wider membership of ESAB are extremely grateful. We all wish Geoff a very happy birthday.

The picture above shows Geoff and his wife Maureen in the middle presenting the cheque for £880 to ESAB Chairman Steve Hodgkiss and his wife Lesley, who is the ESAB Community Worker in Woodbridge.



## ANNUAL SAILING AT LEVINGTON WITH EAST

The photograph shows ESAB member Graham Thompson at the helm of a yacht at a recent sailing day hosted by the East Anglian Sailing Trust (EAST) at Levington Marina near Felixstowe. This has become an annual event in May,



where EAST arranges for a number of their wonderful volunteer yacht owners to take out a number of East Suffolk Blind members on a day's sailing cruise, allowing them to take the helm should they wish to. The yachts are equipped with a sonar steering system that gives audible feedback to the visually impaired helmsman to let them know when they have deviated from their chosen course setting. A lucky 14 members took advantage of this very generous opportunity across two days in mid-May, enjoying some lovely weather and sailing conditions. Should any other of our members be interested in this in future years, please either speak with your ESAB Community Worker or contact the office on 01473 611011. Alternatively for those interested to find out more about the fantastic opportunities that EAST provides for sailors with a disability you can contact them directly on 03330 883278.

---

### **DATA PROTECTION**

In May 2018, the Government introduced new legislation which updated previous legislation on personal data protection. This legislation is known as GDPR and essentially tightens up significantly the way all organisations manage personal data in the areas of consent and sharing of data with other organisations.

East Suffolk Blind has developed a new Data Privacy Notice, the main components of which are:

- What type of information is collected from you
- How we use your personal data
- What the legal basis is for processing your personal data
- Sharing your personal data
- Your rights relating to your personal data

This policy can be seen on our web site at [www.esab.btck.co.uk](http://www.esab.btck.co.uk). If you would like a copy in any other format, please call the office on 01473 611011 to request one.

---

### **HOME VISITING MAGNIFIER SERVICE**

All three East Suffolk Blind home visiting Community Workers are now trained in assessing members individual magnification needs, from the simple hand held through to the more sophisticated electronic hand held types. They are each equipped with an extensive range of demonstration equipment which can be used to

find the appropriate one to meet any individuals' needs and circumstances. Once an appropriate choice has been made, the Community Workers can arrange for the purchase of the magnifier and once delivered they are able to help with training to ensure they are used correctly.

It should be noted that the NHS Hospital eye clinics have a low vision aids clinic which all members can request to be referred to for a similar service.

It is important to note that before you seek to obtain any magnifier, you should first be certain that you have had a recent eye test and that you are using glasses that were prescribed from that eye test. To arrange for a home visit by one of our Community Workers, please call the office on 01473 611011 to make an appointment.

---

### **WHY REGISTER AS SIGHT IMPAIRED?**

Each local authority in the UK has a register of people who are sight impaired and severely sight impaired. Joining the list is voluntary, but it can help you access discounts and services to make life easier. For people who are sight impaired they include free NHS sight tests, railcards and other travel concessions (33% reduction on fares for both themselves and a companion against all fares (for which there is a one off fee of £20 to obtain the card), local travel schemes and free directory enquiry services from BT.

Severely sight impaired people may also get blind person's income tax allowance, half-price television licence, car parking concessions such as the blue badge scheme, free loan of radios, CD players and TV sound receivers and help with telephone installation charges and line rental.

### **How can I register?**

A hospital consultant ophthalmologist (eye specialist) must examine your sight and complete a Certificate of Visual Impairment (CVI) with you. Your GP can arrange this if necessary. You'll get a copy of the CVI, and copies will be sent confidentially to adult social services (Sensing Change) and your GP. A member of Sensing Change should then contact you to discuss what services and benefits may be available. You can also discuss any of these

potential benefits with your ESAB Community Worker or phone the office on 01473 611011.

---

### **BLIND PERSONS TAX ALLOWANCE**

All registered blind people are entitled to claim a Special Blind Persons Tax Allowance. This means that an additional income of £2,390 (as of April 2018) can be received without being taxed. You can transfer the allowance to your husband, wife or civil partner if you do not earn enough and they do pay tax.

To claim this allowance, call HMRC on 0300 200 3301

---

### **GARDENS ARE GOOD FOR US**

(By kind permission of Stacy Tuttle of Garden Design)

If you've ever enjoyed a cup of tea (or glass of wine) as the sun sets over the trees, or watched seemingly dead twigs come back to life in the spring, it will come as no surprise that gardening is good for our physical and mental health. In fact, studies from Canada, the Netherlands and Japan have found that every 10 per cent increase in exposure to green space translates into an improvement in health equivalent to being five years younger. Stacy Tuttle is a garden designer based in Berkshire who also gives talks to local macular support groups. She believes that a good garden design should appeal to all the senses. "Think about using the sound of chimes or water and plants such as grasses or bamboos that sway and rustle in the breeze," she says. "Scented planting can be effective when used strategically, but it can be overwhelming if lots of differently scented plants are close together."

As a designer, Stacy considers safety and ease of maintenance right from the start. She says: "It's important to make sure the garden isn't over-fussy or overcrowded. I choose plants that aren't too rampant and won't stray across paths." And she has a few tips for making the garden easier to navigate safely: "Planning straight paths and a symmetrical layout will help you find your way around, and you may find it easier to replace steps with a ramp. If that's not an option, make sure you have a sturdy handrail, and highlight the tread edges with white or yellow paint. "Contrast is crucial in your planting too", Stacy says: "A brighter colour palette will be easier to see, especially if the plants are given a darker backdrop such as an

evergreen hedge or a fence painted black or dark green.” Using a variety of green plants in different shades, with an accent of bold colour such as orange, yellow or red works equally well,” she continues. “And in a shady spot, white planting will really stand out and make the area less gloomy.”

---

### **LIVING PAINTINGS**

Have you ever tried the Living Painting service? This is a fun thing to do as a group activity or you can join as an individual. The service is completely free; books are sent through the post by articles for the blind.

The group books contain 2-3 raised images, with 10 copies of each one, a CD with audio description, guidance notes with a copy of the script, plus ideas for running a group session. They also include colour copies of the pictures, for those with some sight. The audio description takes you through a journey and describes the raised picture in detail. At present there is a range of 34 titles, examples of these are:

- Whistle stop tour of Scotland
- At the Theatre
- The Blitz
- Famous Teddy Bears
- A Walk Along a River Bank
- Ocean Odyssey
- Mysterious Women

If any group facilitator would like to try out one of our group books, they can register as a member of the library and receive a Touch to See Book Club book within a week. Books can be borrowed for up to 3 months and there is no charge at all for this service.

If any-one would like to join the Living Paintings library as an individual, this is also possible. Please call the Living Paintings office on 01635 299771. Website: [www.livingpaintings.org](http://www.livingpaintings.org)

---

## **UNSCENE SUFFOLK**

Unscene Suffolk is a community theatre company for adults with visual impairment based in Suffolk. It was founded in February 2013 by workshop leader Jenni Halton, with support from the New Wolsey Theatre and Sensing Change. The company has produced five productions to date. Two upcoming Unscene Suffolk events in 2018 are detailed below.

### **Firstly an Evening with the Three Chordettes**

Friday 13th July 2018

Manor Ballroom, 4 St Margaret's Green, Ipswich IP4 2BP

Join us on 13th July to celebrate Unscene Suffolk's 5th birthday in style, with music from The Three Chordettes vintage trio and a fish 'n' chip supper included in the ticket price. Whether you prefer to sit and tap your feet or boogie-woogie the night away, it promises to be a fantastic evening. All proceeds will go to Unscene Suffolk and iFit Suffolk, so please help us spread the word and reach new supporters.

Tickets £17.50 from [www.wolseytheatre.co.uk](http://www.wolseytheatre.co.uk) or 01473 295900

### **Secondly - The Greatest Show.... that Never Happened**

Welcome to the Cornhill Music Hall, where a dazzling spectacle of music, movement, magic and melodrama is billed for your entertainment, but unexpected events threaten to derail the show!

Will disaster be averted...? Will Sue get sawn in half? Why didn't the psychic predict all of this?

Prepare to be amused, astonished and a little bit miffed as Unscene Suffolk's company of visually impaired actors celebrates old-time variety in this light-hearted musical play for blind and sighted audiences.

Saturday 13th Oct at 3pm and 7pm and Sunday 14th Oct at 6.30pm  
Ipswich Town Hall, Cornhill, Ipswich

All performances are audio described, with touch tours beginning 15 minutes before the show and there is a British Sign Language interpreted performance at 3pm on 13 October. Tickets will be available in due course via the Regent Theatre Box Office.

This is an amateur production funded by The Big Lottery and Suffolk Community Foundation through Joy Abbott Fund, David and Jill Simpson Fund and Suffolk Giving Fund.



## **TRAVELEYES**

You may have heard of Traveleyes – they are the world’s leading travel organisation offering worldwide adventures for both blind and sighted travellers. On each trip, half the group are blind or visually impaired, and half are fully sighted. They pair a different sighted blind traveller with a different blind traveller for each day of the holiday. In return for being the eyes for their blind travellers, their sighted travellers receive a discount of their trips, subsidised entirely by Traveleyes. This means that their blind travellers don’t pay any more for accessible travel, and benefit from one on one guiding for the whole trip as well as live audio description. Every year Traveleyes take thousands of travellers on holidays all over the world, from India and China, to Peru and Australia, to Europe and the UK.

Traveleyes was founded in 2004 by Amar Latif, the blind entrepreneur & TV presenter, to allow blind people to travel the world with freedom and independence. They now take travellers from all over the world on our adventures, and are always aiming to reach out to as many blind & visually impaired travellers as possible.

They are offering a 5% discount to all ESAB members off their first trip, so that they can come and experience the world with Traveleyes! To use this offer, just quote the code ‘5%2018’

Information about Traveleyes and all of their trips can be found on their fully accessible website at <https://traveleyes-international.com>

Last year, they took a member of the RNIB on a trip to Myanmar, and he self-filmed his travels and shared his experiences as a visually impaired traveller on one of their holidays. You can check that out at <https://www.youtube.com/traveleyesltd>, and you can see a blog written by one of their blind travelers at <https://traveleyes-international.com/blog/adventures-traveleyes-liz-frankland/>

They are passionate about opening the world to as many blind and visually impaired travellers as possible. If you would like any more information, or to discuss any of this, please do get in touch with them on 0113 834 6094.

## **TRAVEL AND TRANSPORT TIPS BY A FEW UN-NAMED VIPs FOR ALL OTHER VIPs**

### **Enjoy the view**

"Although I no longer go birdwatching, I use my binoculars to read signs and look at flowers, paintings, exhibitions, or just the scenery".

"When travelling on public transport, I carry my "monocular" unobtrusively in my fist. It magnifies ten times so I can bring it up to my eye to read the boards on the station platform, or spot the route number on a bus from up to 100 metres away."

### **Keep tabs**

"Add bumpers (tactile sticky dots) to your luggage to help you identify it on the luggage rack or carousel."

"It used to be difficult for me, when out shopping with my husband, to find our car in the supermarket car park, but now there's a yellow sticker in the rear window, I can locate it easily."

### **Delegate the driving**

If you regularly make the same journey, list it on [www.liftshare.com/uk](http://www.liftshare.com/uk) and see if you can get a lift with someone who has a spare seat in their car.

See if there's a "Daisy" in your area. "Driving Miss Daisy" is a network of "community companions" whose accessible cars can be booked to get you to and from medical appointments, or anywhere else. See [www.drivingmissdaisy.co.uk](http://www.drivingmissdaisy.co.uk) for more information.

### **Who else can help?**

Registering as sight impaired may mean you get discounted or free access to local bus, train and tram travel, although the details will vary depending on where you live. Contact your local council to find out what services they offer for visually impaired people. When planning a train journey, call the free National Passenger Assist number (0800 022 3720). With 24 hours' notice they can arrange for staff to meet you at each station, make sure you get on the right train and even carry your bag. In late 2017, Virgin Atlantic announced that they would start to provide audio-described in-flight entertainment.

### **Stand out at the bus stop**

Many people with macular degeneration can see the bus approaching, but cannot read the route number until it is very close or too late to indicate to the driver that you want it to stop.

Print out in large bold black ink on white paper, each of the service numbers you use the most into the centre of each quadrant of an A4 sheet of paper. If you are unable to do this at home, visit your local stationery shop and they can also laminate it for you so they are durable and waterproof.

---

### **AGE RELATED MACULAR DEGENERATION PATIENTS REGAIN SIGHT FROM STEM CELL TREATMENT**

The first patients to receive a new treatment derived from stem cells for people with wet age-related macular degeneration (AMD) have regained enough vision to be able to read.

The study is a major milestone for the London Project to Cure Blindness, which was funded by the Macular Society in 2008.

AMD is the most common cause of sight loss in the UK, and can lead to a rapid loss of central (reading) vision. The two patients who underwent the procedure, a woman in her early 60s and a man in his 80s had wet AMD and declining vision.

The study investigated whether the diseased cells at the back of the patients' affected eye could be replenished using the stem cell based patch. A specially engineered surgical tool was used to insert the patch under the retina in the affected eye of each patient in an operation lasting one to two hours. The patients were monitored for 12 months and reported improvements to their vision. They went from not being able to read at all even with glasses, to reading 60-80 words per minute with normal reading glasses.

Douglas Waters, 86, from Croydon, London, was one of two people who had received the treatment at Moorfields Eye Hospital. He developed severe wet AMD in July 2015 and received the treatment three months later in his right eye. He said: "In the months before the operation my sight was really poor and I couldn't see anything out of my right eye. I was struggling to see things clearly, even when up-close. After the surgery my eyesight improved to the point where I can now read the newspaper and help my wife out with the

gardening. It's brilliant what the team have done and I feel so lucky to have been given my sight back."

London Project to Cure Blindness is a partnership between Professor Pete Coffey from University College London and Professor Lyndon da Cruz, a retinal surgeon at Moorfields Eye Hospital NHS Foundation Trust. The Project has been also been supported by the UCL Institute of Ophthalmology and the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR).

Professor Lyndon da Cruz, consultant retinal surgeon at Moorfields Eye Hospital NHS Foundation Trust said: "The results suggest that this new therapeutic approach is safe and provides good visual outcomes. The patients who received the treatment had severe AMD, and their improved vision will go some way towards enhancing their quality of life. We recognise that this is a small group of patients, but we hope that what we have learned from this study will benefit many more in the future."

Professor Pete Coffey, UCL Institute of Ophthalmology said: "This study represents real progress in regenerative medicine and opens the door to new treatment options for people with age-related macular degeneration. We hope this will lead to an affordable 'off-the-shelf' therapy that could be made available to NHS patients within the next five years."

The results of this ground-breaking clinical study, published in Nature Biotech, described the implantation of a specially engineered patch of retinal pigment epithelium cells derived from stem cells to treat people with sudden severe sight loss from wet AMD. It is hoped that it will also help treat dry AMD in the future.

---

### **EYE DROP RESEARCH COULD REVOLUTIONISE TREATMENT FOR AGE RELATED MACULAR DEGENERATION PATIENTS**

Scientists at the University of Birmingham have developed a type of eye drop which could potentially revolutionise the treatment for patients with age-related macular degeneration (AMD) although they are yet to be trialled in humans. The results of the collaborative research, published in Investigative Ophthalmology and Visual Science, could spell the end of injections into the eye for patients with wet AMD.



Scientists led by biochemist Dr Felicity de Cogan, from the University of Birmingham's Institute of Inflammation and Ageing, have invented a method of delivering the injected anti-VEGF drug as an eye drop instead, and their laboratory research has obtained the same outcomes.

The drop uses a cell-penetrating peptide (CPP) to deliver the drug to the relevant part of the eye within minutes. Dr de Cogan said: "The CPP-drug has the potential to have a significant impact on the treatment of AMD by revolutionising drug-delivery options". "Efficacious self-administered drug application by eye drop would lead to a significant reduction in adverse outcomes and health care costs compared with current treatments. "The CPP-plus drug complex also has potential application to other chronic ocular diseases that require drug delivery to the posterior chamber of the eye.

They believe this is going to be very important in terms of empowering of patients and reducing the cost of treatment to the NHS. Treatment for AMD is expensive and very difficult for patients and the NHS so an eye drop would be very welcome progress."

---

The following two articles are taken from Spotlight, the annual research publication for members of the Macular Society. If you are interested in finding out more you can explore at [www.macularsociety.org/become-member](http://www.macularsociety.org/become-member) or call them at 01264 350 551.

### **NEW NICE GUIDELINES FOR AGE RELATED MACULAR DEGENERATION (AMD)**

In January 2018, the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) published new guidance on the diagnosis and treatment of age-related macular degeneration (AMD) within the NHS. The full document includes 54 recommendations that aim to end the postcode lottery and ensure a better and more consistent service for everyone. At a glance these guidelines state what you should expect from the NHS in England and Wales.

- If they suspect you have active wet AMD, your eye doctor should make an urgent referral to a macular service, whether or not

you have a visual impairment. The referral should normally be made within one working day.

- For confirmed active wet AMD, for which anti-VEGF injections are recommended, you should be offered treatment as soon as possible (within 14 days of referral to the macular service).
- They should consider referring people with AMD causing visual impairment to low vision services, a group-based rehabilitation service to promote independent living, and (if you have central vision loss in both eyes) eccentric viewing training. If they don't, you can call the Macular Society's Helpline (0300 3030 111) to find out about their eccentric viewing training.
- Your doctor should be aware that Avastin is clinically effective for people with wet AMD whose visual acuity is currently better than 6/12.
- Your doctor may consider switching anti-VEGF treatment if there are practical reasons for doing so, but clinical benefits are likely to be limited.
- You should be actively involved in all decisions about the stopping or switching of your treatment.
- Your doctor should provide information in a format you can read and understand for you to take away at your first appointment, and later whenever you ask for it. The information should include contacts for local (such as the East Suffolk Blind) and national support groups.

The Macular Society has patient information on everything from smoking and nutrition to technology and lighting – all of these are available in paper or audio by calling 0300 3030 111 or can be downloaded from [www.macularsociety.org](http://www.macularsociety.org)

- Your doctor should promote peer support for people with AMD, particularly if you are beginning anti-VEGF injections. The Macular Society Helpline can link you with a befriender, provide an “injection buddy” to help take the fear out of your first injection.
- Your doctor should provide opportunities for you to discuss AMD with them, and should mention the possibility of visual hallucinations (Charles Bonnet syndrome) and other sources of information and

support. The Macular Society have found that many people with sight loss still aren't aware that they may experience hallucinations as a result. You can obtain their leaflet from their website [www.macularsociety.org](http://www.macularsociety.org) or by phoning them on 0300 3030 111.

### **INTRAOCCULAR**

Available intraocular lenses for Age related Macular Degeneration (Professor Andrzej Grzybowski University of Warmia and Mazury, Poland)

At the moment, people with age-related macular degeneration (AMD) make the most of their existing sight using low vision magnifiers such as handheld or stand magnifiers, spectacles, handheld telescopes and closed circuit televisions, but these can be cumbersome and unattractive. In recent years, specially designed intraocular lenses (IOLs) have become a possible and attractive way to get around these problems – but each one works differently. Six lens types were reviewed in a study to assess the advantages and disadvantages of each one.

#### **Limitations and complications**

- Some patients expect that lens implantation will immediately improve their vision. Unfortunately, lenses such as the Intraocular lense VIP system require complicated visual rehabilitation, using special software. It is not just a matter of fixing the eye – patients have to learn how to use the implant. All patients undergo two weeks of training (twelve 30-minute training sessions) before surgery, and a three-month rehabilitation program afterwards (five 30-minute training sessions per week for 12 weeks). Some authors also report that after Implantable Miniature Telescope implantation patients require intensive training for three to six months, but there is no information about the type of rehabilitation.
- The serious drawback with lenses like the Implantable Miniature Telescope (although not the Scharioth and LMI lenses) is that magnification at both long and short distances is achieved at the expense of visual field and depth of focus. For that reason the device is implanted in one eye only, so the other eye can compensate for lost peripheral vision.
- Most lenses are not appropriate for patients who have had cataract surgery – the only two implants that seem to be suitable

are the Scharioth Macula Lens and the LMI. Certain Intraocular lenses may make future cataract surgery more complicated too.

- In some cases during the days after surgery, pressure inside the eye increases because the fluid doesn't drain as it should. To avoid this, a small hole or cut may be made in the iris before or during surgery.
- The presence of an implant can make it much harder to monitor the back of the eye to track the progression of Age related Macular Degeneration, or to detect complications after surgery.

### **Conclusion**

In our opinion, there is no single ideal lens for use in existing AMD without drawbacks. The outcomes reported so far are variable, and the technology is so new that we only have short-term results so far. The main problem is that only a minority of eyes will be suitable for each implant, so it's vital to screen patients carefully, and choose eyes with the best potential for visual rehabilitation. Much of the implant's success will depend on the commitment of the patient towards these programs.

---

### **HAND IN HAND SOCIAL CLUBS FOR PEOPLE WITH BOTH SIGHT AND HEARING LOSS**

These monthly social clubs offer people with dual sensory loss the opportunity to meet others in a friendly and caring environment. The clubs offer various activities, talks, socialising, outings and much more. Their fully trained and experienced coordinators are supported by several volunteers.

Aural communication can be challenging, but to ensure their members are fully involved in club activities they provide assistive equipment such as personal listeners. These items make a big difference as they enable members to have their own personal loop system which can be used with or without a hearing aid. A radio microphone is used by the club coordinators and guest speakers which allows freedom to move amongst members.

Clubs are available at Bury St Edmunds, Felixstowe, Ipswich and Lowestoft. Assessment of your needs will be necessary prior to joining a club. If you are interested in joining a club, please call Christine on 01502 717697



## **HOW DO WE TYPE WHEN WE CAN'T SEE THE KEYS?**

(By Matt Harrison, Copper Blue Technology)

### **Alternative keyboards**

If you struggle to use the default touchscreen keyboard on your iPad, you can download the Big Keys Low Vision Keyboard from the App Store for £2.99. This has larger keys and several high-contrast colour options. Users with newer Android devices can change the appearance of the keyboard without downloading additional apps - it's under Settings > Accessibility > Vision.

### **Voice commands**

If you cannot see any keyboard, you can talk to your device instead. The dictation and voice assistant features across both Apple and Android devices are amazingly versatile. By learning a few voice commands you can send text messages and emails, compose lists and complete other text-based tasks using only your voice.

### **Screen readers**

If you still wish to use the keyboard, you can do this through touch alone. You will need to enable your screen reader: VoiceOver for Apple, and TalkBack or a similar app for Android. You can use this to tell you what keys are under your fingers.

### **Hi-vis keyboards**

You may prefer to connect a physical keyboard to your mobile device or computer. A range of high-visibility keyboards can be bought online - some plug in to your device via a USB cable, and others connect wirelessly via Bluetooth.

---

## **APPLE OFFERS ACCESSIBILITY HELP LINE**

A growing number of people with sight loss use Apple products such as the iPhone or iPad and Apple has a dedicated helpline covering accessibility and assistive technology. The helpline is expressly for assisting customers and potential customers with disabilities who wish to use Apple products. Call the 24-hour free phone number on 0800 0480 754.

## **THE ALL-SEEING AI APP**

By kind permission of Matt Harrison, Technology Services Manager at The Beacon Centre

This App can snap pages of text and read them out aloud. Although artificial intelligence (AI) has been around for a while now, the main AI technology to reach the visual impairment market is the talking camera. Broadly, AI means that computers interpret the information they receive and tailor their responses based on our behaviour. You may already be familiar with apps such as TapTapSee and VocalEyes, but Microsoft's Seeing AI (currently only available on Apple devices) is a cut above the rest. Seeing AI combines the functionality of these predecessors with that of optical character recognition (OCR) apps that scan and read text aloud.

The free, easy-to-use app can scan and read formatted text, learn and recognise faces, scan barcodes to identify products, and interpret general scenes. The range of features and its accuracy are remarkable – but what impresses me most is the simple, intuitive way in which the app is controlled. With my previous favourite OCR app, you had to hold the phone above a document and then capture it by pressing a shutter button with your other hand: no mean feat, even for the most dextrous of us. If you didn't capture the whole document, tough; you got what you snapped. With Seeing AI, however, you receive verbal hints that tell you whether the camera can see the entire document. And there is no need to wrestle with your phone to keep it steady while hitting the shutter button: the app automatically takes the photo for you.

If you think that the scene description mode is good, then wait until you try the facial recognition setting! Not only can Seeing AI learn familiar faces, but it will also interpret moods and predict ages. This last feature could offend the more sensitive subject, but it proved quite accurate when I tried it at home (much to my wife's chagrin). The product scanner is a great help in the supermarket too. For me, zapping the barcode will mean the end of buying apple sauce when I want mustard, or spearmint when I want peppermint. Later versions of the app also include banknote detection, handwriting recognition, and modes to gauge light levels or identify colours. As ever, the app is not perfect, but it is rapidly becoming the must-have app of the year.

---

### **TAP TAP SEE**

TapTapSee is a mobile camera application designed specifically for blind and visually impaired phone and tablet users. The app utilizes

the device's camera and VoiceOver functions to photograph objects and identify them out loud for the user; you must turn on VoiceOver (Talkback) to get the audio description.

In practice it is very simple to use. You just hold your device in front of what you want to identify and tap the screen twice. The app then tells you the picture is in progress. You have to wait a few seconds then it will tell you what is in the picture in detail. The app will not only tell you that you just took a photo of a sock, for example, but the colour of the sock and read any writing on it.

I tried it out in the office. It told me I was in an office and identified my keyboard and telephone, even giving me the brand name of the latter. It also identified a "red and yellow apple" on my desk and a box of Lady Grey Twinings tea.

There are 3 buttons on the toolbar at the top of the App screen:

**Repeat Button:** to hear the last identification spoken aloud in case you missed it the first time.

**Library Button:** this gives access to the device's Camera Roll to send images to TapTapSee for identification. To access this feature simply click on the Library button and proceed to select an image that you want to have identified.

**Share Button:** to share the image via Twitter, Facebook, Email, or Text. This button also includes the option to save the image to the device's Camera Roll. The saved image will include the tag that was provided by TapTapSee.

---

## WHAT IS A SCAM?

Scams are frauds and tricks designed to cheat people out of their money. Scammers approach people in a number of ways, including at home, by phone, by post or online. The number of people being tricked by scammers is rising; the following two articles have some handy hints so you can avoid scams and know what to do if you think something might be a scam. Don't be too embarrassed to seek help - millions of people fall for scams and reporting a scam could help to stop the fraudsters.

### Top tips for scams

- Don't open emails or attachments from someone you don't know.

- Your bank will never call you and ask for your PIN number or for you to give your card to a courier.
- With doorstep callers, remember Lock, Stop, Chain, Check.
- Avoid pension scams by getting independent advice before making decisions.
- Don't believe letters claiming you have won a fortune. If you haven't entered a lottery or prize draw, you can't have won it.
- Don't be embarrassed to hang up, say no or ask someone to leave.
- Two organisations you can go to for further help are:
  - Action Fraud – to report a scam – 0300 123 2040
  - Citizen's Advice consumer service – 03454 04 05 06

### **DOORSTEP SCAMS**

Scammers may knock on your door pretending to be traders, perhaps offering to do work on your home or garden. Or they may pose as a charity collector or as someone in need.

Watch out for:

- pushy sellers with large discounts or time-limited offers
- traders who say they've noticed something wrong with your property that they can fix
- charity collectors who can't supply a registered charity number
- people who ask to come in to your home because they say they need help, for example to use your telephone, or claim to feel unwell
- deliveries of goods or products you didn't order and people who later come to collect them - this is a scam where you get billed for the goods that someone else ordered
- people who claim to be from gas and electricity companies but don't have an official ID
- police officers who say they need to see your bank cards and PIN numbers - the police would never ask for this information and these people are actually fraudsters.

### **What to do:**

Remember, you don't have to open the door to anyone you don't know. If you decide to answer the door, take the following steps:

- Lock - Lock all your other outer doors before you go to the front door. Some fraudsters work together - one keeps you chatting while another gets in through a back door.



- Stop - Think about whether you're expecting anyone.
- Chain - Put the door chain on (though don't keep the chain on all the time as it will prevent anyone with a key, such as a home help, from entering). Look through the window or spy-hole if you are able to see who's there.
- Check - Ask for an identity card and examine it carefully. If you're still unsure, phone the company the person claims to represent. Get the number from a bill or your phone book. Don't worry about leaving someone waiting. A genuine person won't mind.
- You can also check company credentials
- If you're being pressured or feel unsafe, contact friends, family or the police.

### **MAIL SCAMS**

Mail scams are sent by post and may be addressed to you directly by name. Postal scams contain fraudulent claims to try to con you out of your money.

#### **Watch out for:**

- lotteries or prize draws, including foreign lotteries, claiming you have won a fortune. These often look legitimate, with barcodes or ID numbers. The letter will ask you to pay an administration fee, buy a product, or call a premium rate phone number to access your winnings
- psychics and clairvoyants who claim to have seen something in your future
- pyramid investment schemes, which ask you to pay a fee and recruit friends or family members to join up in order to get a return on your investment
- hard luck stories of someone asking for money because of unfortunate circumstances, such as illness or poverty
- letters from a 'solicitor' informing you of an unclaimed inheritance, often from a 'relative' overseas.

#### **What to do:**

- If you receive a scam letter, ignore it and throw it away.
- Never reply to these letters. If you do, your details could be circulated to others running similar schemes and you could be bombarded with scam mail.

- Don't call any premium rate phone lines which are given in these letters. These numbers start with 09 and can cost up to £4 per minute to call.
- If you are unsure, check the details of the organisation or solicitor and seek advice.

---

### **HOW TO AVOID BEING SCAMMED**

Unfortunately, as lots of scammers send mail from overseas or through legal loopholes, it can be difficult to stop them.

- You can avoid being added to mailing lists which scammers sometimes get hold of. When you register to vote, tick the box to opt out of the 'edited register' (also known as the open register) as this can be used to send unsolicited marketing mail. If you buy a product online, you will usually be asked if you want to receive direct mail or marketing emails from the company - make sure you tick or untick the correct box if you don't want them to contact you.
- Check credentials for companies and traders.
- You can also register with the Mailing Preference Service. This will stop many direct mailing companies from contacting you and reduce the amount of post you receive.

### **Who to contact:**

- Tell the Royal Mail if you think you have received scam mail and send the items of mail to them with a covering letter.
- Details of overseas scams can be reported to the Citizens Advice Consumer Service who will pass it to Trading Standards.
- Contact the Solicitors Regulation Authority if you get a letter from a solicitor and aren't sure it's genuine. They can tell you if the solicitor's firm is registered and there is a list of reported scams on their website.

---

### **UK POWER NETWORKS**

It is UK Power Network's job to maintain a safe and reliable supply of electricity. Do you or a relative need extra support during a power cut? They can help and their services are free to customers who need it. Power cuts don't happen very often but if the electricity network is damaged or develops a fault it's their job to get your

power back on. Their engineers will work around the clock 24/7 to restore your power as quickly and as safely as possible.

To give you peace of mind, if you live in London, the East or South East of England, then being on their Priority Services Register will ensure you will receive extra support if you experience a power cut.

### **Who can receive extra support?**

- If you rely on medical equipment
- If you have refrigerated medicines
- If you have a serious or chronic illness
- If you have a disability
- If you or someone you care for is living with dementia
- If you are of pensionable age
- If you have children under five in your household
- If you need extra support for a short time period (e.g. If you are recovering from medical treatment)

### **What help should I expect to get?**

- A priority number that you can call 24 hours a day
- A dedicated team who will contact you to keep you updated during a power cut
- Tailored support if needed such as home visits, hot meals, advice and keeping your friends and relatives updated
- In certain scenarios they may also offer a free hotel overnight and transport to the hotel

You can call them on 0800 169 9970 to register

### **Who are UK Power Networks?**

They own and maintain electricity cables and lines across London, the South East and East of England making sure that your lights stay on. Customers do not pay electricity bills to them.

Keeping you updated during a power cut 24 hours a day:

- Call 105 or 0800 31 63 105
- [ukpowernetworks.co.uk/powercut](http://ukpowernetworks.co.uk/powercut)
- Text POWER and your postcode to 80876
- Deaf or hard of hearing? Text Relay 18001 0800 31 63 105

### **A BIT OF HUMOUR**

These are actual comments made on students' report cards by teachers in the New York City public school system. All teachers were reprimanded (but, boy, are these funny!)

- Since my last report, your child has reached rock bottom and has started to dig.
- I would not allow this student to breed.
- Your child has delusions of adequacy.
- Your son is depriving a village somewhere of an idiot
- Your son sets low personal standards and then consistently fails to achieve them.
- The student has a 'full six-pack' but lacks the plastic thing to hold it all together.
- This child has been working with glue too much.
- When your daughter's IQ reaches 50, she should sell.
- The gates are down, the lights are flashing, but the train isn't coming.
- If this student were any more stupid, he'd have to be watered twice a week.
- It's impossible to believe the sperm that created this child beat out one million others.
- The wheel is turning but the hamster is definitely dead.

### **A BIT MORE HUMOUR.....CURTAIN RODS**

On the first day after his divorce, he sadly packed his belongings into boxes, crates and suitcases. On the second day, he had the movers come and collect his things. On the third day, he sat down for the last time at their beautiful dining-room table, by candle-light; he put on some soft background music, and feasted on a pound of shrimp, a jar of caviar, a bottle of spring-water, 3 cans of sardines. When he'd finished, he went into each and every room and deposited a few half-eaten shrimps dipped in caviar, and some sardines into the hollow centre of the curtain rods. He then cleaned up the kitchen and left. On the fourth day, the wife came back with her new boyfriend, and at first all was bliss.

Then, slowly, the house began to smell.

They tried everything; cleaning, mopping, and airing-out the place. Vents were checked for dead rodents, and carpets were steam cleaned. Air fresheners were hung everywhere. Exterminators were brought in to set off gas canisters, during which time the two had to move out for a few days, and in the end they even paid to replace the expensive wool carpeting. Nothing worked!...People stopped coming over to visit. Repairmen refused to work in the house...The maid quit.

Finally, they couldn't take the stench any longer, and decided they had to move, but a month later - even though they'd cut their price in half – they couldn't find a buyer for such a stinky house. Word got out, and eventually even the local realtors refused to return their calls.

Then the ex called the woman and asked how things were going. She told him the saga of the rotting house. He listened politely and said that he missed his old home terribly and would be willing to reduce his divorce settlement in exchange for having the house. Knowing he could have no idea how bad the smell really was, she agreed on a price that was only 1/10th of what the house had been worth ... but only if he would sign the papers that very day. He agreed, and within two hours her lawyers delivered the completed paperwork. A week later the woman and her boyfriend stood smiling as they watched the moving company pack everything to take to their new home and to spite the ex-husband... they even took the curtain rods!

I LOVE A HAPPY ENDING, DON'T YOU?

### **A BIT MORE HUMOUR.....THE CHANGING ROOM OF A GOLF CLUB.**

Several men are in the changing room of a golf club. A mobile phone on a bench rings and a man engages the hands-free speaker function and begins to talk. Everyone else in the room stops to listen:

**MAN:** "Hello"

**WOMAN:** "Hi love, it's me. Are you at the club?"

**MAN:** "Yes."

**WOMAN:** "I'm at the shops now and found this beautiful leather coat. It's only £2,000; is it OK if I buy it?"



**MAN:** "OK, go ahead if you like it that much."

**WOMAN:** "I also went to the Lexus dealership and saw the new models. I saw one I really liked."

**MAN:** "How much?"

**WOMAN:** "£90,000."

**MAN:** "OK, but for that price I want it with all the options."

**WOMAN:** "Great! Oh, and one more thing... I was just talking to Jamie and found out that the house I wanted last year is back on the market. They're asking £980,000 for it."

**MAN:** "Well, then go ahead and make an offer of £900,000. They'll probably take it. If not, we can go to the extra eighty-thousand if it's what you really want."

**WOMAN:** "OK. I'll see you later! I love you so much!"

**MAN:** "Bye! I love you, too."

The man hangs up. The other men in the locker room are staring at him in astonishment, mouths wide open.

He turns and asks, "Anyone know whose phone this is?"

---

### **EASTER BONNETS AT SHOTLEY**

The Shotley group held an Easter bonnet competition at their March social event, which was judged by PC Chris Garrod after his crime prevention talk. A very happy afternoon was had by all as you can see.



## EAST SUFFOLK BLIND CONTACT NUMBERS

Beccles/Halesworth/Southwold/Lowestoft      JENNY      01502 717159

Leiston/Woodbridge/ Framlingham      LESLEY      01473 611650

Felixstowe/Shotley Peninsula/Eye/Stowmarket      IAN      01473 788380

Head Office      01473 611011



### RETURNS SLIP FOR THE SUMMER 2018 NEWSLETTER

If you require any of the following please tick relevant boxes.

Instead of large print I would like to receive the ESAB Newsletter:

On USB Memory Stick

On CD

By email at: .....

(Insert your email address)

I no longer want to receive the Newsletter

I would like my Community Worker to visit

If there is anything you are concerned about please use this space to let us know

YOUR NAME:

POSTCODE:

Return to ESAB, The Old Station, Little Bealings, Woodbridge, Suffolk  
IP13 6LT

**EAST SUFFOLK BLIND INVITES YOU TO  
ATTEND AN EQUIPMENT AND INFORMATION  
EXHIBITION IN FELIXSTOWE FOR THE  
VISUALLY IMPAIRED**

This is a fabulous opportunity for visually impaired people and their families or carers to come along and have access to an enormous amount of information and advice about local services that are available to them, but also the incredible amount of affordable daily living aids that can be demonstrated and purchased to help with independent living. Please do all that you can to attend.

**EVENT DETAILS ARE:**

**WEDNESDAY 12<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 2018  
10am to 3.00pm**

**at**

**FELIXSTOWE TRADES & LABOUR CLUB  
182 HIGH ROAD WEST  
FELIXSTOWE  
IP11 9BB**

**LIGHT REFRESHMENTS WILL BE  
AVAILABLE**

Please contact your Community Worker Ian Hunt on 01473 788380 if you would like help in organising transport.