

York Blind and Partially Sighted Society

Annual Report and Accounts
2009/10



Years of Creating Opportunities



Mentoring and
Befriending
Approved
Provider



LOTTERY FUNDED



Duke of York
Community
Initiative
Award



**York Blind and Partially Sighted Society
1979 to 2009
30 years of providing opportunities**

YBPSS is a registered charity that advocates, develops and provides services and facilities which enable people who are blind or partially sighted, achieve independence with dignity, in all aspects of life, and sectors of society.

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30 Years of Developing and Providing Opportunities for blind and partially sighted people in York

July 5th 1979 was a special day. It was the day York Blind and Partially Sighted Society became a registered charity.

July 5th 2009 was equally special; it marked 30 years of YBPSS developing services and providing opportunities for blind and partially sighted people in York. Our celebrations began with a cruise on the River Ouse, which was so popular we had to repeat it in order not to disappoint anyone!



Cruising on the River

Underpinning our 30 year development is the understanding that sight loss can be devastating. It can affect anyone, regardless of their age, gender, personal circumstances or health. It can impact on every aspect of a person's life, but with the right help and support that impact can be minimised.

This year we helped a record number of visually impaired people, people like Beryl who tells her story below.

“When I was first diagnosed with Macular Degeneration the staff in the Equipment Centre were very friendly and welcoming and spent a long time reassuring me. I joined the Macular Degeneration (MD) Support Group and found it an invaluable way of meeting new friends with

similar sight problems. Now I have joined the exercise class, the book group and the local history group. Joining in with these activities in a supportive environment has given me more self-confidence and made me feel like a normal person again.”

We want every blind and partially sighted person to feel included in everyday society, and to have all the help and support they need, when they need it.

We have come a long way in the last 30 years. In 1979, the object of York and District Voluntary Society for the Visually Handicapped (our original name) was –

To promote the general welfare of the blind and those substantially and permanently handicapped by defective vision.

Today, whilst we still have the same object, our name and mission statement more accurately reflect the way we work –

YBPSS advocates, develops and provides services and facilities, which enable people who are blind or partially sighted, achieve independence with dignity, in all aspects of life and sectors of society.

This report shows how we bring our mission statement to life with the help of staff, volunteers and supporters of all descriptions.

If you want to ensure 1,000 visually impaired people in York continue to receive help, please get in touch. There is no doubt that the future will be challenging, but together we can help blind and partially sighted people ‘get more out of life’.

Diane Roworth, Chief Officer
Mike Jones, Chairman

The opportunity to Know More About Sight Loss – and treat everyone as an individual

Explaining how a visual impairment affects your ability to see is not easy. There is a world of difference between having full vision and no vision at all, and many blind and partially sighted people find the general public simply do not understand. We do.

Sight loss is very individual and no two people with the same eye condition will see things the same.

- Most people who lose their sight are in later life – 80% of our members are aged over 65

Most blind and partially sighted people have some vision, which could be

- **Central vision only** making it difficult to move around safely (sometimes known as tunnel vision)
- **Peripheral vision only** making it difficult to read and recognise faces. This is an effect of Macular Degeneration, which is the most common cause of sight loss in older people
- **Cloudy, patchy or blurred vision** possibly changing daily, sometimes caused by Diabetic Retinopathy
- **Around 10%** of blind and partially sighted people can only see the difference between light and dark, or have no vision at all.

We can help people understand their eye condition and show relatives and friends the best way of helping. We can also help organisations by providing training for their staff, and thus ensure community services are provided in such a way that blind and partially sighted people can use them.

The Opportunity to Find the Right Support and Equipment – at our Equipment and Information Centre

“My Mum received a great deal of help from your encouraging and helpful staff and the specialists who have given talks on managing Macular Degeneration. She is using, with great benefit, several vision and writing aids and I would like to thank you for the help you have given her.” (Louise, daughter of Emma)

Emma is typical of the 1,696 people using our Equipment Centre this year. Most were older people, losing sight in later life, some have additional hearing and mobility impairments, but all can be helped in some way.



Our Equipment & Information Centre

Every visitor to our centre is treated as an individual, and receives a personal service which can include –

Help to continue everyday activities independently, like making a cup of tea safely, cooking, shopping, following hobbies, watching TV.

Help to continue reading by making the best use of lighting, simple magnifiers or electronic devices, large print, audio or Braille information and library services.

Help to use new technology such as mobile phones, talking book machines, televisions, audio description at home and at the theatre, and of course computers.

Help in understanding their eye condition and making choices through receiving the right information at the right time in the right way.

In a survey of a sample of Equipment Centre users –

- 73% said their visit met their expectations
- 27% said it exceeded their expectations
- Over 50% said they were now more independent
- 65% bought something they could not get elsewhere

A visit to the Equipment Centre can also provide

- An information pack on local and national services. 202 packs were sent out, 93 to people who were newly registered blind or partially sighted last year.
- Equipment on loan, such as CD or tape players, electronic magnifying devices such as TV readers
- A free quarterly newsletter in large print, tape, Braille or electronic formats.
- A referral for another service, such as the City of York Council rehabilitation service, or RNIB Talking Books. We provided 163 subscriptions to the Talking Book service through funding from the City Council.
- Leisure and learning opportunities at YBPSS.

“All the staff and volunteers have been so helpful, wise and informative. I love my Talking Books, my computer is set up with what I need and I am practicing the eccentric reading technique, but I don’t find it easy. I know it isn’t much but I enclose a small donation. It no way covers all you have done for me but I know every little helps. With renewed thanks and every best wish, Sarah.”

The Opportunity to ‘See Things Differently’ at York Hospital Eye Clinic

“Thank you so much for your time. If it hadn’t been for you I’d have wandered around aimlessly in tears, not knowing what to think or do or where to turn. I’d have been a mess. You have helped me to see things differently.” These were the parting words of a patient with a newly diagnosed sight loss, after talking to Vanessa, our Eye Clinic Liaison Officer at York Hospital.

When a person experiences a loss of vision, it can be devastating. How am I going to manage, what will happen to me, how will I be able to look after my home and family, will I go totally blind? These are all the sorts of questions that people begin to ask themselves.

Providing an opportunity to discuss these fears and concerns is important. Our Eye Clinic Service is there to help patients through this difficult time.



Vanessa and a visitor

This is Christine’s story. Christine attended a Low Vision appointment and was loaned a magnifier but she needed help with other things. She had limited mobility as well as a visual impairment, but wanted to be as independent as possible. Christine and Vanessa talked over the issues and options were identified which would help her to remain as independent as possible, such as –

- Large print and talking books could make reading easier. These could be obtained from a local mobile service, or postal services like RNIB and Calibre
- Good lighting and colour contrast would help make the best use of her remaining vision to do everyday tasks more easily
- A visit to YBPSS Equipment and Information Centre would offer many more choices of equipment
- York Wheels, a community transport scheme, could help her get around independently without having to ask friends
- Joining our Macular Disease Support Group which meets every two months would give Christine the opportunity to meet other people with the same condition and get valuable peer support

This year nearly 400 people used our Eye Clinic service for the first time and have found it invaluable.

This service helps deliver the outcomes identified in the UK Vision Strategy, whose principles have been adopted by the NHS. And it doesn't just benefit the patients. It is also helpful to busy medical staff who want to provide the best support they can to their patients.

Roger Ellingham, Consultant Ophthalmologist at York Hospital, said "The work of YBPSS is of immense importance to local people and the Hospital Eye Unit. We refer many patients each week to YBPSS, particularly those we register as visually impaired. YBPSS offers support in the form of listening, counselling and practical advice as well as the more obvious forms of support with Low Vision aids. This support helps avoid the social exclusion which many of our patients otherwise experience."

The Opportunity to have Help at Home – our Volunteer Visiting Service

“I would be in a different place altogether if it wasn’t for my volunteer” is praise echoed by many blind and partially sighted people who use our Volunteer visiting Service.

Our 54 volunteers provide weekly one-to-one support to anyone who needs help to remain independent. Practical tasks such as dealing with paperwork, getting out for a walk or shopping, keeping up leisure activities, or providing valued companionship and a ‘listening ear’ are typical tasks our volunteers undertake.



The right volunteer can make an enormous difference, as Milly’s story shows.

Milly’s sight loss had left her feeling “not on top of things”. She didn’t feel able to keep her life organised or to learn new skills such as using her Talking Book machine. She wanted to feel her house was more ordered and, in her words – was “a competent working house”.

Milly was matched with June, a volunteer from YBPSS. After three or four months of June's visits, Milly was feeling much more in control and able to keep her day-to-day life in order. Paperwork was sorted, checked and filed so that Milly could find it easily and arrangements made so that she could make payments by phone. June also helped Milly to start using her CD player again, so she could enjoy music as well as Talking Books.

June did more than provide just practical support – she helped Milly to talk through some of the difficulties she was experiencing related to her eye condition and treatment. This helped her become more positive about the future. Milly now feels much more 'in control' of her life.

Most of the people who use this service are older people who have had good sight for all their lives. It can be very hard to adjust to life with impaired sight. Our volunteers offer people the opportunity to do just that.

Our At Home Service helps people who can't come to our Equipment and Information Centre. Volunteers take equipment to people like Lily.

Lily's story: "The At Home Service makes a big difference to me. I have very poor mobility and if you have more than one disability like me, it's very important to get the help at home. The volunteers are marvellous; they have helped me many times. Talking equipment is so important and I am lost when it goes wrong. My friends are old, like me, and it's too much to ask them to take me to the Society. The volunteers are great and I hope the service continues."

The Opportunity to Have Fun, Learn and Increase Confidence – through activities, open days and support groups

Having a visual impairment need not stop anyone from having fun. A record number of blind and partially sighted people have developed new interests, made new friends and found new confidence through attending activities. Thanks to funding from the Big Lottery Fund our range of groups has expanded, offering more opportunities to more people.

Providing a safe and supportive environment makes all the difference and enables people to achieve things they would not be able to otherwise. This is what some of our users say.

Knit 'n' Natter Group – “I’ve achieved something that I thought was impossible, plus I have the companionship of another friendly YBPSS group.”

Exercise Class – “It’s very therapeutic and jolly good company. I live alone and it gets me out of the house.”



Reading Group



Exercise Class

Reading Group – “I have widened my reading and benefited from getting to know other members of the Society.”

Walking Group – “I have a friendly escort who enables me to walk in lanes and other paths which wouldn’t be possible on my own.”

Anne, our activities organiser also organised

- A rag-rug taster day
- Visits to the Theatre
- A Local History Course in conjunction with the Workers’ Education Association
- An Insight Course for people who are newly visually impaired

... and other staff organised

- A high tech Open Day
- A cruise on the river Ouse
- A Christmas lunch and visit to the Pantomime
- A Volunteers Thank You party

So that we can create more opportunities, we worked with many other organisations, like

- The Falls Prevention Service and Age Concern
- York Hospital and the City of York Council
- The National Association of Local Societies for Visually Impaired People
- York Theatre Royal and Grand Opera House audio description teams
- Action for Blind People and RNIB



Meeting Jimmy Osmond after an audio described performance of Cabaret at York’s Grand Opera House

The Opportunity to Learn How to Use a Computer – with one-to-one tuition

Computers can open up a whole new world and having little or no sight need not stop anyone from using a computer.

Thanks to funding from the Big Lottery Fund, we can provide one-to-one computer tuition using specially adapted computers and software.

- On screen colours can be changed
- On-screen text can be enlarged many times
- The mouse pointer can be enlarged, or key-strokes used instead
- Text can be converted into speech
- Keyboards can be adapted to make them easy to see
- A scanner can scan personal letters and display the text on screen or convert it into speech

The average age of our trainees is 75 years, and they say the training has improved their skills, helped them to be more independent and increased their confidence.



Bob said “I enjoy coming to the centre, everyone is very friendly and Julie is a fantastic tutor.”

An Opportunity to Thank Our Local Community – for giving us so much

Thirty years ago YBPSS was an entirely voluntary organisation. Today, we have paid staff, but we benefit greatly from the amazing support we receive from local people, local and national trusts and statutory agencies in York. We certainly could not survive without it.

Seated are Hon President Brian Smith and Alderman Jack Archer, founder members, with Jack Scobie who is our longest serving volunteer, and Diane Roworth



Our supporters give money, time, expertise, goodwill and enthusiasm for helping blind and partially sighted people.

At Home Service volunteers deliver equipment to people unable to leave their homes, and also publicise the society.

Office Volunteers support our administration in many ways from posting our newsletter to helping on reception.

Other volunteers provide Eccentric Vision training and help with activities and fundraising.



Over 120 volunteers give around 8,000 hours a year, ensuring that, together, we really make a difference to the lives of people who live with sight loss.

Successful Fundraising Creates Opportunities – for us to help more people

Fundraising of all kinds is essential to YBPSS, and is what makes it possible for us to help as many people as we do.

Fundraising volunteers are fabulous people. They give many hours of their time and help in so many different ways. Here are some examples.

- Tadcaster Grammar School pupils raised £2,000 through a sponsored walk
- £970 was collected while carol-singing in Coppergate
- eBay volunteers raised around £2,000
- Give as you earn, a dress down day, a sponsored bike ride, a jewellery sale, and a church group coffee morning are all examples of fundraising activities undertaken on our behalf
- Our Dragon Boat teams raised over £2,000

Dragon Boat crews tuck into the 30th Birthday cake after paddling their canoes



Legacies are a way of making a gift to us without it costing anything in the person's lifetime. We received £12,631 in legacies this year and are extremely grateful to the people who made these gifts.

Our Members are also very generous. We received £6,222 in regular donations and more than £350 as a gift from the Golden Wedding celebration of one of our members.

Pink Elephants in shops and public houses raised £1,767 - can you give one a home?



We sincerely thank the following Trusts, organisations and people who made a donation to us this year. We are very grateful, and could not operate without their support.

Abbey National
Alcuin Lodge of Freemasons
Barclays Trust Company Banking
The Charles Brotherton Trust
Rotary Club of York
Provincial Grand Charity
Shepherd & Dickson Trust
Tadcaster Grammar School
Patricia & Donald Shepherd
N & P Hartley Memorial Trust
James Tudor Foundation
York County Round Table
Sir Jules Thorn Charitable Trust
Carmen Butler-Charteris Charitable Trust
Norman Collinson Charitable Trust
The Sydney Black Charitable Trust

William Birch & Sons
RNIB
Karen Ireland
The Childwick Trust
Dorothy Howard Trust
McArthur Glen
Percy Bilton Charity
Will Charitable Trust
Ulverscroft Foundation
George Martin Trust

Opportunities for Helping Blind and Partially Sighted People through YBPSS

Together we can help blind and partially sighted people get more out of life. Everyone can contribute something, as this report shows. Contact us now to find out how we can match your abilities to our needs.

Volunteer some time to help at our centre, or to help on a one-to-one basis with an individual visually impaired person.

Use your skills and expertise to help us with publicity, campaigning on issues that affect blind and partially sighted people, governance, service development, legal issues or employment.

Give some time to help with fundraising activities, like emptying pink elephant collecting boxes, organising events, helping with St Crux sales or singing carols in Coppergate at Christmas.

Donate good quality items that we can auction on eBay.

Make a donation – a regular one would help even more.

Remember us in your will – making a gift to us in your will costs you nothing during your lifetime, but makes a huge difference to us.

Call today and join hundreds of people who help YBPSS. Ring Diane Roworth, Chief Officer on 01904 636269.

We guarantee you'll enjoy knowing you make a difference.

Staff and Committee Members

An Executive Committee governs YBPSS; its members are the Trustees of the Charity. The Committee is elected annually and every effort is made to ensure a majority of members are visually impaired. Members were:-

Mr Mike Jones	Chair
Mr Jack Scobie	Vice Chair
Mrs Mary Fairbrother	Honorary Secretary
Mr Alex Rough	Honorary Treasurer

Other Committee members were Mrs J Agnew, Mr B Shead, Mrs E Shead, Mrs A Smith, Mr T Thompson, Mr D Waudby, Mr I Wood, Mr K Cameron, Ms S Cairns.

Members of staff were Diane Roworth, Chief Officer; Alison Cragg replaced by Harriet Bisson, Volunteer Co-ordinator; Deborah Wheller and Fiona Samuel, Equipment & Information Centre Officers; Michelle Cooper, Fundraising Manager; Stine Blowers, Community Fundraiser: Maggie Martin replaced by Vanessa Camp, Eye Clinic Liaison Officer; Barbara Fairs, Office Manager: Alison Backhouse, Accounts & Talking Books Service: Ann Mattam, Activities Co-ordinator.

YBPSS Accounts for April 2009 to March 2010

These summary accounts are compiled from the full accounts, independently examined by Creers, Chartered Accountants, York. The full Trustees and Independent Examiners report can be obtained from the Honorary Treasurer or the Charity Commission.

The generous support of members, friends, Trusts, the Big Lottery Fund, City of York Council, and North Yorkshire and York PCT ensured we provided real help to blind and partially sighted people in York.

Summary Accounts for the Year 2009/2010

<u>Income</u>	<u>2009/2010</u>	<u>2008/2009</u>
	£	£
<u>City of York Council</u>		
Volunteer Visiting Service	18,491	18,040
Equipment & Information Centre	20,536	20,036
Council Equipment Service	4,684	4,569
Talking Books Service	14,366	14,287
Total	58,077	56,932
<u>North Yorkshire and York PCT</u>		
Equipment & Information Centre	16,298	16,137
Eye Clinic Service	21,675	21,460
Total	37,973	37,597
Total Service Agreements and Contracts	96,050	94,529
<u>Other Grants</u>		
Big Lottery Fund	34,082	43,509
D of H Opportunities for Volunteering	-	5,850
Access To Work Equipment	-	3,256
<u>Other Income</u>		
Social and 30 th Birthday Activities	2,512	889
Training, Services and Equipment Hire	702	1,033
E&I Centre Sales	16,463	16,264
Bank Interest & Other Income	6,094	4,027
Fundraising Income	56,906	35,212
Donations & Gift Aid	24,340	25,510
Lord Mayor's Charity Fund	-	17,664
Legacies	12,631	13,126
Total	153,730	166,340
Total Income	249,780	260,869
Restricted	93,299	108,115
Unrestricted	156,481	152,754
	249,780	260,869

<u>Expenditure</u>	<u>2009/2010</u>	<u>2008/2009</u>
	£	£
Big Lottery Fund (see note 1)	36,154	40,744
Salaries, NI & Pension	125,255	124,051
Staff Expenses (travel etc)	869	1,563
Volunteer Expenses (travel etc)	685	698
Office Expenditure (see note 2)	34,768	34,744
Recruitment and Advertising	2,543	369
Social and 30th Birthday Activities	4,047	1,117
Newsletter and Publications	3,280	3,766
Fundraising and Publicity	1,897	2,089
Talking Books Membership	12,219	11,950
Equipment & Information Centre Purchases	16,063	17,979
Council Equipment Purchases	3,023	3,530
Opportunities for Volunteering Purchases	-	2,419
Talking Signs & React Cards	-	946
Depreciation	911	911
Independent Examiners' Fee	1,449	1,533
Total Expenditure	<u>243,163</u>	<u>248,409</u>
Restricted	96,396	109,902
Unrestricted	146,767	138,507
	<u>243,163</u>	<u>248,409</u>
Surplus/deficit for the financial year	6,617	12,460
Restricted	(2,722)	(1,787)
Unrestricted	9,339	14,247
	<u>6,617</u>	<u>12,460</u>

Balance Sheet as at 31st March 2010

	<u>2010</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2009</u>
Tangible Fixed Assets		-	910
Current Assets			
Stock	7,755		8,613
Cash at Bank & In Hand	112,652		100,922
Debtors	2,943		5,256
		123,350	114,791
Liabilities and Amounts falling due within one year			
Creditors and Accruals		4,861	3,829
		118,489	110,962
Total Assets less Current Liabilities		118,489	111,872
Represented by			
Restricted Funds (see note 3)		10,672	13,394
Designated Building Fund (see note 4)		51,290	48,290
Unrestricted Funds		56,527	50,188
		118,489	111,872

Notes to the accounts

1) This covers part rent, salaries, tutor fees, computer equipment, volunteer expenses and transport.

2) Office expenditure includes part rent, insurance, heat and light, telephone, stationery, postage, equipment repairs, staff training, subscriptions and sundry expenses.

3) Restricted funds can only be applied to the specific service or project. Restricted funds are such as The Eye Clinic Service, Council Equipment, Talking Books and Talking Signs.

4) The Designated Building Fund is a fund created to specifically procure and sustain new premises.

The photographs on the front cover show

- A trainee using our computer facilities
- A visitor using our Equipment and Information Centre
- One of our volunteer visitors with their client

We have changed the names of the individual people whose stories have been used in this report, but the content is entirely accurate.

Together we can help blind and partially sighted people get more out of life. Could you

- Volunteer your time or expertise
- Make a donation, a regular one would help even more
- Remember us in your will
- Support our work in any way you can

Contact us today and join more than 100 other people who volunteer to help.

Ring us on 01904 636269.

We guarantee you'll enjoy knowing you make a difference.

This report is produced in 16 point print as standard. Larger print, Braille and audio formats are available on request, and it is on our website (www.ybpss.org). Please telephone 01904 636269.