

YBPSS Mission Statement

....to advocate, develop and provide, 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.

Introduction,

from Diane Roworth, Chief Officer

The front cover shows Jayne 'bouncing back' on a giant bungee trampoline, YBPSS collecting boxes in hand. It's not the first daring stunt Jayne has done to raise funds to help other blind and partially sighted people. She did a 10,000 ft skydive, on her 41st birthday too. In fact, both Jayne and her 14-year-old son, who is also partially sighted, are real supporters of the Society. They host Friends Of YBPSS meetings in their home, as well as organise and take part in a host of different events. It's thanks to people like Jayne and Ashley that our fundraising efforts are proving successful.

Jayne has 'bounced back' herself, by changing careers and becoming self employed. She has opened her own business, using help and support from organisations who know the real difficulties that visually impaired people face in everyday life.

Here at YBPSS, we can help people 'bounce back', when they have had the devastating news that their sight is deteriorating, and there is no treatment that can help. We listen to their concerns, provide support, show equipment that can help overcome some of the practical difficulties, and signpost them to other services.

Jayne is not typical of the members of YBPSS. The majority of blind and partially sighted people are over 65; in fact 800 of our 1,000 members are 65 or over. When sight fails in later life, adjusting can be very difficult, particularly if you don't know help is available. That's why our services are so important.

We provide a range of different services designed to meet specific needs. Information and support at the time of diagnosis, on-going news and information in a format people can read, one-to-one practical support in the home, and a Resource Centre anyone can visit, 5 days a week to see equipment and find out about services and benefits.

Our overall aim is to enable people to live as independently as is possible, both in their own home, and as part of the community.

With the support of people like Jayne and Ashley, and the many many members, trusts and local organisations who help us each year, we can do that, and do it well.

The following pages give a snapshot of how we help blind and partially sighted people living in York, their carers, and our community. A report like this can only scratch the surface, but it does give a flavour of the many and varied activities we undertake, and the people who use them. I hope you enjoy reading it, and that you may become a supporter of YBPSS.

Diane Roworth, Chief Officer
On behalf of the Executive Committee and staff of YBPSS

"Having AMD, as yet not seriously, I visited your Resource Centre to see what aids are available, and was very surprised and cheered".....

Our Resource Centre

Many visitors to the Resource Centre have AMD. It stands for Age Related Macular Degeneration, an eye condition that is the most common cause of sight loss in older people. It rarely leads to a total loss of vision, usually affecting central vision only, making close and detailed work very difficult. Reading for example, can be very difficult, as can recognising people's faces, but walking around is generally manageable.

A visit to the Resource Centre can open up lots of different options for people to choose from. Options, which we hope, will help them retain their independence, by offering alternative ways of doing things.

Try to make the most of existing vision by: -

- ✓ Using good lighting and magnifying aids when reading
- ✓ Using large print - ask banks and utilities to correspond in large print, read large print books, use felt pens for writing, subscribe to Big Print newspaper and TV guide
- ✓ Sitting closer to the TV set, and avoid having light reflecting on the screen, or using a screen enlarger

Try using sound, instead of vision

- ✓ Try reading using tapes rather than books, borrowing these from York Library, or subscribe to the RNIB Talking Book Service in CD format
- ✓ We can arrange the loan of a radio cassette recorder
- ✓ Try a talking watch or clock

And where it's possible, **make the most of touch**

- ✓ Feel the different shapes of coins, as well as looking at them (or use coin holders to separate out the difficult ones)
- ✓ To cross roads safely and independently, use the rotating cones underneath the button at green man crossings. The rotating cone starts to spin when the green man lights up, so you know it's safe to cross, even if you can't see the green man light up.

Many of our visitors, like the lady above, come when they discover they have a newly diagnosed sight loss. However, the centre is used on a regular basis by blind and partially sighted people who want to keep up to date with the latest equipment, by friends, relatives, carers and professionals.

- **Last year we had 1,222 visitors, who bought equipment worth £8,641**
- **We updated the display with the latest equipment by adding 20 new items, including the very first Digital Radio with spoken station announcements.**

The Resource Centre is open Monday to Friday between 10am and 2pm. No appointment is needed; however, it is on the first floor. Anyone unable to manage the stairs can telephone in advance of a visit, and **Deborah Wheller or Fiona Samuel**; our Resource Centre Officers will meet them on the ground floor.

The Executive Committee are aware of the difficulties that visitors experience, because of our premises, and are developing a strategy (Vision for the Future) which will enable us to move to a more appropriate, accessible location.

"I thank you for my first copy of the newsletter. It was grand to be able to read some news, instead of being told what's on around York, thank you all."

Accessible Information

There is no greater threat to independence than not being able to read. **Blind and partially sighted people can read**, provided they receive their information in an accessible format. Like our newsletter. We produce it in large print (as this Annual Report), on cassette tape, in Braille and in different computer formats.

1,000 copies of the newsletter were sent out every 3 months, free of charge, in a variety of formats.

Hundreds of requests for information, help and advice were dealt with by telephone.

88 people, who were newly registered as blind or partially sighted, received a copy of our information pack, and were welcomed as new members.

190 subscriptions to Talking Books were paid for.

30 TV readers were loaned out. These devices enlarge print onto a TV screen; making it readable by people with very little vision.

Our website was updated (www.ybpss.org).

In addition, visitors to the Resource Centre could find out about how to get information in a format they could read, including their rights under the Disability Discrimination Act to do so. Services like Talking Newspapers, Big Print newspaper or Audio Description, or a demonstration of how computers can be made accessible, a large print or voice diary, magnifiers, or a talking mobile phone could help someone retain their independence.

"I can't thank you enough for my volunteer, he is a Godsend. I thoroughly enjoy his company; sometimes we do a crossword together; sometimes he takes me for a run in the car. Life can be very lonely when you're in a situation like mine."

Home Visiting Service

With 800 of our 1,000 members being over 65 years old, and over 500 of those being over 80, isolation due to sight loss and poor mobility, is a common problem. Our volunteer Home Visiting Service can provide a lifeline.

On the face of it, inviting a complete stranger into your home could appear to be quite a daunting prospect. For the volunteer, agreeing to visit a visually impaired, often elderly person on a weekly basis could be seen as quite a heavy commitment. So, why does it work? Here are the stories of two successful matchings of volunteer, and visually impaired person (names and some details have been changed to protect confidentiality, but all comments are genuine.)

Frances, aged 85, is a widow and lives alone. She is unable to go out on her own and has had great difficulty coming to terms with her sight loss and increasing lack of mobility. Frances is prone to mild depression. Her volunteer, Jack, visits weekly. "Jack is a Godsend. I thoroughly enjoy his company; sometimes we do a crossword together; sometimes he takes me for a run in the car, but what I most enjoy is talking and having a laugh. Life can get very lonely when you're in a situation like mine and each day passes in much the same way. However, Jack's visits on a Wednesday morning are something to look forward to, a real tonic."

Vanessa, volunteer, admits to having had a “colourful” past but is now determined to get her life back on track. “Volunteering was a scary thing to sign up for at first, but I enjoyed the training and found I learnt a lot. I was nervous when I was introduced to my client and worried whether we would have anything to talk about. But things are going really well. I take Jessie for a little walk near where she lives, and point out things of interest. She has only been in York for a short time and doesn’t know many people so she really appreciates our time together. As each visit progresses I feel more confident and conscious that although what I am doing is primarily for Jessie's benefit, it is also helping me”.

If you would like more information on becoming a volunteer like Jack or Vanessa, or if you know of someone like Frances or Jessie who would appreciate a regular visitor, please get in touch with **Alison Cragg, Volunteer Home Visiting Service Co-ordinator**.

Providing information and support at the earliest opportunity is vital.

York Hospital Eye Clinic Service

Around 100 people a year are registered blind or partially sighted. Many more have a newly diagnosed sight loss, but, because they are not registered, do not automatically receive an assessment or services. Yet support and advice at an early stage can make a real difference to the way people adjust to living with deteriorating vision. Help early on can enable people to retain their independence longer.

We provide a service in the Eye Clinic, outpatients department at York Hospital. Recently, a patient was

attending a routine check. He was concerned that he may lose his blue badge, as he was registered partially sighted, and had been told he needed to re-apply. During the course of the conversation, he told us his sight was deteriorating, and that he had severe walking difficulties due to spinal problems. Our support worker suggested he ask the consultant if his deterioration in vision meant he could be registered as blind. During the consultation, this was done. This meant that he would automatically qualify for a blue badge, and no longer needed to worry that his application would be turned down. He would also receive an assessment visit from the City Council where any further help that was needed could be identified.

The issues that are important to patients in the eye clinic are as individual as the people are themselves. What is important is that patients can have time to identify their needs, to make contact with services that can help, and to know that there is help available, both now and in the future.

The service was fully provided until the end of January 2005. A skeleton service was provided during February and March whilst negotiations regarding funding with the Primary Care Trust were taking place.

- 265 people used the service in total
- 115 Home assessment visits were undertaken, providing one to one advice on equipment, basic rehabilitation and other appropriate services

In addition, we were able to support hospital staff in other parts of York Hospital, who had patients with a visual impairment. We look forward to the service being fully operational soon.

"Thank you for the talking signs, they make it much easier to get around York".

Talking Signs

The original 2-year project was designed to install 32 Talking Signs. These signs confirm to the user, their location and surroundings, and enable blind and partially sighted people to navigate York's busy streets more easily.

Because of extra funding from various sources, this original network was increased to 40 the project timescale was also extended, and an even larger network of around 44 signs will be in place by the end of 2005.

The signs are activated by a trigger card, which the user carries with them. We provide these free of charge, to any visually impaired person who would like one. This ensures that anyone who wants to use the network can do so, without expense. We have issued 150 activator cards, and visitors to York can also borrow a trigger card from the Tourist Information Centre.

This project is a real success and has been achieved by the continued support of the Talking Sign Committee, the Community Fund, The City of York Council, and the RNIB.

"We want to improve access to our historic building, can some of your members come and give us their opinions and advice please?"

Working with Others

We often receive requests such as this, whether it's an historic building, an art collection, or a local transport plan.

We do our best to provide appropriate input from staff and volunteers, which can bring real long-term benefits to all visually impaired people in the community. This year we have worked with, amongst others, **The Merchant Adventurers Hall, Benningbrough Hall and the City of York Council**

We also rely on other organisations that work with us, for our members' benefit. **We wish to thank** Herbert Todd and Son, The City of York Council, York Health Services NHS Trust, The York and Selby Primary Care Trust, Radio York, Fulprint, the Yorkshire Evening Press. We would also like to thank York Theatre Royal and their team of volunteer audio describers for their continued commitment to the audio description service.

Our 42 regular donors, the exceptional support of our fundraising volunteers, the local groups who organise events, or make donations, and everyone who supports us, enable all of our services to be provided.

Developing Fundraising Skills

In our first full accounting year of independent fundraising, we have done really well.

- **£29,540 of our income** came from spontaneous donations, regular donations, legacies and some Trusts
- **£30,161 of our income** came from the fundraising activities organised by Linda Hill, our Fundraising Manager, including

Yellow Home Collecting Boxes	£1,813
Pink Elephant boxes	£5,260
Street and Store collections	£5,989
Community Events	£6,962

We have **exceptional support from volunteers** who organise and participate in, so many different activities. Emptying Pink Elephants, joining in with street and store collections, organising a Christmas Fayre to name a few. Sponsored events are fantastic, some of those organised on our behalf have been a Bike Ride, a Navigation Competition, The Three Peaks Challenge, a Fishing Match, and a Pub Collection.

We really do appreciate ALL our volunteers, and welcome new ones with open arms! On the last page of this report, is a thank you to all the Trusts and groups who have made a donation to us during the year.

YBPSS Accounts for the Year April 2004 to March 2005

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

The Trustees are pleased with the way our independent fundraising is developing. This year was the first full accounting year of independent fundraising, and the Trustees are pleased to report good progress. It is only with the very generous support of members, trusts and donors that the organisation was able to continue to provide and develop its services, and provide real help to its members.

York Blind and Partially Sighted Society
Summary Accounts for the Year 2004/05

<u>INCOME</u>	<u>2004/05</u>	<u>2003/04</u>
	<u>£</u>	<u>£</u>
<u>City of York Council</u>		
Volunteers Scheme	16,440	16,200
Resource Centre	12,510	12,210
Equipment Service	4,161	4,100
Talking Books – subscriptions	10,800	10,800
Talking Books - administration	2,833	2,860
Total	46,744	46,170
 <u>York & Selby Primary Care Trust</u>		
Resource Centre	15,774	15,389
Eye Clinic/Rehab	21,053	20,466
Total	36,827	35,855
 Total Service Agreements and Contracts	 83,571	 82,025
 <u>Grants and Other Income</u>		
Community Fund - Talking Signs	19,300	35,161
Lloyds TSB Charitable Foundation (note1)	-	8,000
RNIB Partnership in Fundraising	-	2,522
Interest Received	1,950	1,399
Social Activities	178	867
Training and Equipment Hire	712	1,065
Legacy and Donations	29,540	24,071
Fundraiser Income (note 1)	28,201	5,284
Fundraiser income - capital fund	1,960	-
RNIB Shared Fundraising		9,183
Total	81,841	87,551
Resource Centre Sales	<u>8,645</u>	<u>9,442</u>
Total Income	<u>174,057</u>	<u>179,019</u>
Restricted	77,757	95,094
Unrestricted	<u>96,300</u>	<u>83,925</u>
	<u>174,057</u>	<u>179,019</u>

<u>EXPENDITURE</u>	<u>2004/5</u>	<u>2003/4</u>
	£	£
Salaries	99,524	83,040
RNIB Talking Signs Manager	14,420	23,432
Staff Expenses (travel etc)	1,367	834
Volunteer Expenses (travel etc)	694	825
Office Expenditure (see below)	19,880	17,711
Recruitment advertising	726	1,760
Social Activities	347	2,060
Newsletter and Publications	2,518	2,807
RNIB share of fundraising	-	2,937
Fundraising and Publicity	2,209	715
Talking Books Membership	11,880	10,080
Resource Centre Purchases	10,544	10,092
Council Equipment Purchases	3,442	2,318
Talking Signs & React Cards	379	8,592
Depreciation	2,139	1,598
Independent Examiners Fee	<u>2,201</u>	<u>680</u>
Total Expenditure	<u>172,270</u>	<u>169,481</u>
	Restricted	86,641
	Unrestricted	<u>82,840</u>
		<u>172,270</u>
		<u>169,481</u>
Surplus for the financial year	1,787	9,538
	Restricted	8,453
	Unrestricted	<u>1,085</u>
		<u>1,787</u>
		<u>9,538</u>

Notes to income/expenditure accounts

- 1) The Fundraiser is credited with the grant from Lloyds TSB Charitable Foundation 2004, and the Capital Fund 2005
- 2) Office expenses include rent, insurance, heat and light, telephone, stationery, postage, equipment repairs, staff training, subscriptions and sundry expenses

York Blind and Partially Sighted Society
Balance Sheet as at 31st March 2005

<u>2005</u>	<u>2005</u>	<u>2005</u>	<u>2004</u>
Tangible fixed assets		1,933	2,054
Current Assets			
Stock	6,444		6,522
Cash at bank and in hand	79,110		78,221
Debtors	1,248		2,098
	<u>86,802</u>		<u>86,841</u>
Liabilities, amounts falling Due within one year			
Creditors and accruals	13,478	<u>73,324</u>	<u>15,425</u> <u>71,416</u>
Total assets, less current Liabilities		<u>75,257</u>	<u>73,470</u>
Represented by			
Restricted Funds		27,677	24,388
Designated Building fund		6,358	6,358
Unrestricted funds		<u>41,222</u>	<u>42,724</u>
		<u>75,257</u>	<u>73,470</u>

Notes to the above

Restricted funds can only be applied to the specific service or project. Restricted funds are such as The Community Fund Talking Sign Project, The Eye Clinic Service, Council Equipment and Talking Books services.

The designated Building Fund is used to set aside monies specifically for the procurement of new premises.

The Community Fund, Talking Sign Project income was £19,300, expenditure £16,826; the balance of £2,474 is added to the previous year balance, giving a total surplus of £3,236. The Community Fund has given their permission to use this balance to further develop the Talking Sign Network.

Our Organisation and its People

York Blind and Partially Sighted Society is a local, independent charity (no 508914), working with and for blind and partially sighted people in the City of York. Membership is free, and automatic, for anyone registered blind or partially sighted, or who needs services.

It is governed by an Executive Committee, the members of whom are the Trustees. The committee is elected annually, and we strive to ensure a majority is visually impaired, although this is not always achieved. Members from 2004-5 were: -

Mr Bob Shead	Chair
Mr Mike Crouch	Vice Chair
Mr Jack Scobie	Honorary Secretary
Mr Alex Rough	Honorary Treasurer

Other Committee members were Mrs M Fairbrother, Mr M Jones, Mrs E Shead, Mrs A Smith, Mr T Thompson, Mr T Wheeler and Ms R Harrison; Mrs G Chippett retired during the year after taking up full time employment.

Members of staff were Mrs D Roworth, Chief Officer, Mrs A Cragg, Volunteer Co-ordinator, Mrs D Wheller and Mrs F Samuel Resource Centre Officers, Mrs L Hill, Fundraising Manager and Mrs L Duggan and Mrs A Backhouse Admin, Assistants. Mrs P Mullen and Mr S Smith left during the year.

Our 100+ volunteers give generously of their time, and we could not manage without them. They provide our Volunteer Visiting Service, help mail out our newsletter, help in the Resource Centre, and provide admin. assistance and raise funds for us. **We thank them all.**

We are extremely grateful to the local groups and Trusts who have helped us by making a gift or financial contribution. We really could not provide our services without their help.

Feoffees of St Martins and St Helens,
The Carmen Butler-Charteris Charitable Trust,
The Charles Brotherton Trust,
WTI Unison Branch,
The Lynn Foundation,
The Sydney Black Trust,
The Sylvia and Colin Shepherd Charitable Trust,
Arlish and Chambers Charity,
The Sir Jules Thorn Charitable Trust,
Nestle Rowntree Employees Community Fund,
Skipton Building Society,
St Peters School,
The Gannett Foundation,
The Percy Bilton Charity,
The Tony Bramall Charitable Trust,
Leeds Hospital Fund Charitable Trust,
The Norman Collinson Charitable Trust,
Rotary Club of York Ainsty,
York Lions,
Derwent Lions,
Rotary Club of York,
Leeds & Holbeck Building Society Charitable Foundation,
Lexis Nexis

This report is published in 16-point print, which is accessible to many visually impaired people. It is also available on tape, in Braille and on our website.