

York Blind and Partially Sighted Society

Helping People to Live Independently

Anna's volunteer work was recognised by the Blairs at a Downing Street reception

**Duke Of York
Community
Initiative
Award**

**Mentoring and
Befriending
Approved
Provider**

Annual Report and Accounts 2006-2007

YBPSS Helping 1,000 Visually Impaired People in York

To Live Independently

Sight loss can impact on every aspect of a person's life. That impact varies according to a person's age, the degree of sight loss, their hopes and aspirations and the amount of support they have.

We are an independent local charity that provides many different services to help people with little or no vision to be as independent as possible.

- Our display of **specialist aids** shows how 'easy to see', tactile or talking equipment can help overcome everyday difficulties such as telling the time, reading and writing, using computers, cooking etc
- We give **information** about services such as Talking Books, financial benefits, holidays, employment options, support groups etc., by phone, in person or via our newsletter in large print, Braille, tape and email
- Our knowledgeable staff and dedicated volunteers provide **practical and emotional support** through our Resource Centre, Eye Clinic Service and Volunteer Visiting Services
- We **listen** to the views of visually impaired people and involve them in the running of the organisation and the shaping of services

Our mission is to ... **advocate, develop and provide services and facilities to help people who are blind or partially sighted achieve independence with dignity, in all aspects of life and sectors of society.** This report gives a snapshot of the things we do to fulfil that mission.

Our Activities This Year

Our Resource Centre

- Helped 1,243 visitors choose appropriate equipment and services to help keep their independence
- Sold equipment worth £11,464
- Kept up to date by demonstrating 24 new items
- Started a new 'At Home' delivery service for people unable to visit our centre

Our York Hospital Eye Clinic Service

- Helped 258 people cope with deteriorating vision and gave information and reassurance to many more
- A survey of users revealed they thought the service was excellent

Our Volunteer Visiting Service

- Provided practical and emotional support and social contact to 50 blind and partially sighted people
- Received acknowledgement of its valuable work when Anna, one of our volunteers, represented all volunteers at a Downing Street reception

Our Information Service

- Sent out 1,000 newsletters every quarter in large print, tape, Braille and electronic formats
- Provided Talking Books to 170 people
- Sent an information pack to 90 newly registered blind and partially sighted people
- Loaned TV Readers and CCTVs to 35 people

We received

- A very generous legacy of £26,000
- The Duke of York Community Initiative award plaque

We provided social opportunities by

- Hosting regular Macular Disease Support Group meetings
- Working with York Art Gallery to provide 2 art courses
- Visiting Helmsley Walled Garden
- Organising a Christmas lunch and visit to the Pantomime
- Working with York Theatre Royal to introduce new members to Audio Described theatre performances

We represented the views of our members by

- Meeting with First Bus about the new ftr bus service in York which was difficult for members to use
- Joining 1,000 other blind and partially sighted people at Westminster, to lobby Parliament for higher rate mobility allowance

Some of our members at the lobby

Every Member is an Individual

We know that visual impairment is very individual. No two of our 1,000 members will see things the same way, or have the same personal circumstances, wants or needs.

- 80% of visually impaired people in York are over 65 years old, 50% are over 80 years old
- The majority are female and live alone
- Most visually impaired people have a loss of central vision which makes it difficult for them to read or to recognise faces
- Some visually impaired people have a loss of peripheral vision which can make it difficult to walk around safely
- Some visually impaired people have blurred or patchy vision which can change on a daily basis
- Some visually impaired people cannot see in dark or dimly lit environments, and find it difficult to go out at night
- 10% of our members have no sight at all, or can only tell the difference between light and dark

YBPSS Helping People
At our Resource Centre

1,243 visually impaired people, friends, family members and professional staff visited our Resource Centre.

£11,370 of equipment was sold on a not-for-profit basis, the most popular items being talking watches and clocks.

A visit to our Resource Centre can open up a world of opportunities. Equipment, services and

information specifically designed for people with little or no vision can help people retain their independence.

Jean and her son and daughter-in-law came on a first visit to our Resource Centre. She had recently been registered as partially sighted because of Macular Degeneration affecting her central vision.

She was feeling lost and in her own words, quite hopeless. Her family were concerned as to how she would cope as she lived alone. During her first, and subsequent visits, she learned about

- How lighting, a magnifier and using colour contrast can help her make the best use of her vision and help her read more easily
- How equipment like an easy to see watch, black felt tip pen, bump-ons to mark her microwave and cooker, and a liquid level indicator for pouring drinks, can help her do everyday tasks independently

**Quotes from visitors
to our Resource
Centre**

“Thank you for your many kindnesses and for giving us your time.”

“The work that you do and the service you provide are to be greatly applauded.”

- She joined our Macular Disease support group so that she could get support and social contact
- She was referred to our Home Visiting Service for a regular volunteer

Every person is an individual and we strive to find him or her the equipment or service that is the most appropriate for them.

- **Muriel learned about Audio Description** at York Theatre Royal. She now uses this service and goes to the Theatre regularly. Audio Description has opened up the world of theatre for her again, by providing a live commentary describing the parts of the play she may not be able to see.
- **Henry tried out the Eezee TV Reader.** This plugs into a television set and magnifies print onto the TV screen in a much enlarged form. He found it wonderful for reading his Racing Post.
- **Peter was not able to use magnifying devices** to read. We arranged a home demonstration of Chatterbox – a scanner which can convert print into speech. He can now read own post independently.

24 extra items of equipment were added to our display, to keep it up to date and reflect new developments.

This is the only facility of its kind in York. Without it, blind and partially sighted people would not be able to see, try out and buy equipment that can help them live independently.

YBPSS Helping People
At York Hospital Eye Clinic

258 people had significant help and support at the earliest opportunity from Maggie, our Eye Clinic Liaison Officer.

Many more received information leaflets, quick demonstrations of equipment, phone calls to check on progress, or support in other ways.

Quotes from users

“I am so grateful there is some-one to talk things over with.”

“Until we met you, we felt we had fallen through the net.”

For many people, their vision loss will be permanent and could have significant impact on their independence. Our service is here to help people manage, by ensuring they receive the information, support and services they need.

Betty was waiting for an assessment visit from Social Services and was distressed, losing confidence and needing immediate help. A hospital optometrist referred her to Maggie. Maggie visited Betty at home, reassured her that help was available, and organised several things to help her retain independence.

- Bump-ons to mark her cooker to make it safe for her to carry on cooking
- Dial-A-Ride transport, so she could carry on visiting the local supermarket and doing her shopping
- Attendance at a social group for visually impaired people, so she could carry on meeting people
- Home delivery of library books, so she could carry on reading

Betty and Maggie keep in touch and Betty knows that help is always available if needed.

YBPSS Helping People
In their own Homes

Our Volunteer Visiting Service provides a lifeline for many blind and partially sighted people every week.

Visual impairment, together with the natural ageing process, can mean that many older people become socially isolated.

Volunteers provide essential practical and emotional support when they make their regular weekly visit. Volunteers help people to do things they couldn't otherwise do, like the following examples show.

Quotes describing 2 of our 50 volunteers

“Mum’s volunteer is wonderful and has such a caring manner. Mum so looks forward to her visits.”

“My volunteer is always reliable and I really look forward to his visits.”

“Alice, my volunteer, is such a lovely person. We chat about what has been happening during the week, then she gets my calendar and writes any appointments on it. She reads the post and helps me write replies. We reward ourselves with a cup of tea and chocolate biscuits before she leaves.”

“Stephen is always reliable and I really look forward to his visits. Sometimes we go out for the afternoon, to a Garden Centre or for a drive. It’s lovely to smell the flowers, the fresh air and get away from these four walls for an hour or two.”

Do you have an interest in people, are a good listener and are non-judgmental? If so you might be just the person to be a Home Visiting Service volunteer. Full training and expenses are provided.

Information is power. If you don't have information, you can't make choices.

We try to give blind and partially sighted people independent access to information, by producing it in formats that people can read and by providing equipment that can help people to read.

**Quote from a
newsletter reader**

"I was delighted to receive your newsletter. It was the best yet, particularly so because there are lots of things going on that I feel I can join in with."

1,000 newsletters in large print, tape, Braille and electronic formats were sent out free, every quarter, advertising new equipment, services, events and most importantly, keeping in touch with our members.

90 people who were newly blind or partially sighted received an Information Pack.

78 people had a Low Vision appointment, assisting them in choosing a magnifier, lighting and other equipment to help them read print.

35 people had a CCTV or TV reader on loan which enlarges print onto their TV screen so they can read. Other high tech equipment can be tried out at our Resource Centre.

170 people received RNIB Talking Book Service and many more received information about large print and audio libraries.

YBPSS receives

Fantastic Support from our Members and the Community

Once again, we have had fantastic support from our members and local community.

The generosity of people in York has made it possible for us to provide our full services yet again.

York Art Gallery ran Art Workshops specifically for our members.

Support comes in many different ways.

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

York Theatre Royal volunteers provided Audio Described theatre performances.

Round Table members delivered Christmas Hampers to 9 visually impaired people.

Our own volunteers provided hundreds of hours help:-

- Posting out our newsletter
- Providing administration support and helping in the Resource Centre
- Running the Macular Disease Support Group
- Visiting blind and partially sighted people in their own homes
- Delivering equipment to housebound members
- Helping on outings and at our AGM
- Promoting and monitoring Talking Signs
- Supporting fundraising events of all descriptions, come rain, hail or even sunshine!

Here are just a few examples of the many donations and offers of help we received, all equally appreciated.

York Round Table donated £750 so we could buy new equipment for our Resource Centre.

York Rotary Clubs chose us as one of the charities they supported with the Dragon Boat Race – they gave us £7,000.

Turn Up and Sing Messiah raised £508.

Christmas carols in Coppergate raised £894.

Many individuals gave very generously, including:-

- Mr & Mrs Brown donated £200 received in lieu of gifts following their Golden Wedding Anniversary
- Margaret's friends donated £390 in her memory
- We received a legacy of £26,000 which was put into our Building Fund, to help us move to accessible premises
- Michael ran the Great North Run and donated £440
- Ian's friends sang carols and donated £275
- Members made regular donations of over £4,000

Our Pink Elephant Collecting Boxes were in over 80 retail outlets and pubs in York. The Sun Inn at Acomb collected £155, the highest amount ever in a Pink Elephant box.

Donations from Trusts and Others

We sincerely thank the Trusts and local groups who made a gift or financial contribution. We really could not have provided our services without their help.

A & S Burton 1960 Charitable Trust	Albert Hunt Trust
A M Fenton Trust	Childwick Trust
Arlish & Chambers Charity	Fulprint
Dean's Garden Centre	HSBC Staff
Feoffees of St Martin's & St Helen's	Lynn Foundation
Jack Brunton Charitable Trust	Minster Lions
Joseph Rowntree Foundation	Percy Bilton Charity
Lloyds TSB Foundation	Royal Victoria Trust
Mollie Croysdale Charitable Trust	York Rotary Club
Nestlé Rowntree Employee Community Fund	
Norman Collinson Charitable Trust	
N&P Hartley Memorial Trust	
R R Donnelly Charity Committee	
Skipton Building Society	
Sir Jules Thorn Charitable Trust	
Sovereign Health Care Charitable Trust	
The Charles and Elsie Sykes Trust	
The Charles Brotherton Trust	
The Sydney Black Charitable Trust	
The Sylvia and Colin Shepherd Charitable Trust	
William Birch & Sons Ltd (office staff Give As You Earn)	
York Ebor & County Round Table	
York & North Yorkshire Community Foundation	
York University Student Union	

Voluntary income received

Regular donations from members	£4,200
Donations and gift aid	£19,567
Fundraiser Income from all sources	£53,370
Legacy	£26,000

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 Bob Shead	Chair
Mr Mike Jones	Vice Chair
Mrs Mary Fairbrother	Honorary Secretary
Mr Alex Rough	Honorary Treasurer

Other Committee members were:- Mrs J Agnew, Mr H Crawford, Mr M Crouch, Mr D Reibel, Mr J Scobie, Mrs E Shead, Mrs A Smith, Mr T Thompson, Mr S Unwin.

Members of staff were:- Diane Roworth, Chief Officer; Alison Cragg, Volunteer Co-ordinator; Deborah Wheller and Fiona Samuel, Resource Centre Officers; Debbie Eade, Fundraising Manager; Maggie Martin, Eye Clinic Liaison Officer; Barbara Fairs, Administration Co-ordinator; Alison Backhouse, Accounts & Talking Book Service.

YBPSS Accounts for April 2006 to March 2007

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 Trustees were pleased with the progress made in fundraising. The generous support of members, friends, trusts, donors, the City of York Council, and Selby & York Primary Care Trust (now North Yorkshire & York Primary Care Trust) ensured we provided real help to blind and partially sighted people in York.

Summary Accounts for the Year 2006/2007

INCOME	<u>2006/2007</u>	<u>2005/2006</u>
	£	£
<u>City of York Council</u>		
Volunteers Scheme	17,205	16,818
Resource Centre	16,247	12,885
Equipment Service	4,358	4,260
Talking Books – subscriptions	10,800	13,800
Talking Books – administration	3,039	2,971
Total	51,649	50,734
<u>Selby & York Primary Care Trust</u>		
Resource Centre	15,774	15,774
Eye Clinic Service	21,398	1,500
Total	37,172	17,274
Total Service Agreements and Contracts	88,821	68,008
 <u>Grants and Other Income</u>		
Opportunities for Volunteering	7,332	-
Community Fund – Talking Signs	-	6,658
Other income – Talking Signs	1,573	750
Interest Received	3,089	2,649
Social Activities	383	375
Training and Equipment Hire	360	1,125
Legacies and Donations (including Gift Aid)	49,767	20,297
Capital Fund – Contribution to Braille	-	2,500
Resource Centre Sales	11,464	12,505
Discount Received	1,000	896
Fundraiser		
Lloyds TSB Charitable Foundation	10,000	10,000
Other fundraising income	43,370	34,131
Income for Braille – Capital Fund	-	2,300
Fundraiser Total	53,370	46,431
Total	128,338	94,186
Total Income	217,159	162,194
Restricted	81,627	61,589
Unrestricted	135,532	100,605
	217,159	162,194

EXPENDITURE

	<u>2006/2007</u>	<u>2005/2006</u>
	£	£
Salaries	108,977	89,305
Staff Expenses (travel etc)	1,672	1,517
Volunteer Expenses (travel etc)	490	308
Office Expenditure (1)	23,734	20,017
Recruitment and Advertising	3,084	1,143
Social Activities	657	800
Newsletter and Publications	2,660	2,517
Fundraising and Publicity	786	939
Talking Books Membership	11,880	12,810
Resource Centre Purchases	12,588	13,829
Council Equipment Purchases	3,232	2,265
Opportunities for Volunteering Purchases	411	-
Talking Signs & React Cards	195	10,059
Depreciation	2,700	3,287
Independent Examiners Fee	1,602	701
Total Expenditure	174,668	159,497
Restricted	78,938	66,498
Unrestricted	95,730	92,999
	174,668	159,497
Surplus for the financial year	42,491	2,697
Restricted	2,689	(4,909)
Unrestricted	39,802	7,606
	42,491	2,697

Notes to income/expenditure accounts

1) Office expenditure includes 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 2007

	<u>2007</u>	<u>2007</u>	<u>2006</u>
Tangible fixed assets		4,760	4,728
Current Assets			
Stock	6,447		5,749
Cash at bank & in hand	110,693		80,167
Debtors	1,300		1,306
		118,440	87,222
Liabilities and Amounts falling due within one year			
Creditors and Accruals		2,754	13,996
		115,686	73,226
Total Assets less Current Liabilities		120,446	77,954
Represented by			
Restricted Funds (2)		17,457	14,768
Designated Building Fund (3)		50,661	12,858
Unrestricted Funds		52,328	50,328
		120,446	77,954

Notes to the Balance Sheet

2) 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, Talking Books services and Opportunities for Volunteering.

3) The Designated Building Fund is used to set aside monies specifically for the procurement of new premises. The Trustees were pleased that they had been able to increase this fund by £37,800 during the year, due largely to a legacy received.