

# York Blind and Partially Sighted Society



## Making an Impact



### Annual Report & Accounts 2010/11



Mentoring and  
Befriending  
Approved  
Provider



LOTTERY FUNDED

Duke of York  
Community  
Initiative  
Award



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](http://www.ybpss.org)).



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## **Making an impact, by helping people stay independent**

As we end the third year of our Big Lottery Fund grant, we can look back with pride at the difference it has made. The grant has enabled us to help more blind and partially sighted people, AND to increase the quantity and quality of services we provide.

- **Our Equipment and Information Centre helped 5% more people**
- **Our Volunteer Visiting Service helped 10% more people**
- **Our Eye Clinic Information and Support Service helped 20% more people**

The results of our customer surveys tell us

- 57% of visitors to our Equipment Centre said they were more independent as a result of their visit, 61% said we helped them make the best use of their remaining vision and 81% bought something they could not get elsewhere
- Patients using our Eye Clinic service said they would not have known where to go for help had we not been there
- Our leisure and learning activities increase people's confidence, and 92% of computer trainees said we helped them be more independent.

The Big Lottery grant is very important to us, but so is the continued support of all of our funders, the expertise and dedication of our staff, committee and volunteers, and the support of our local community. Together, we can make a real impact for blind and partially sighted people. The coming year will bring uncertainties over funding, but the knowledge that our users need, and value, our services gives us the enthusiasm to meet the challenges ahead. If you can help us meet those challenges, then we urge you to do so, and thank you in anticipation.

Diane Roworth, Chief Officer and Mike Jones, Chair.

## **The individual impact of sight loss and the people who use our services**

We are in regular contact with 1,000 blind, partially sighted and visually impaired people who live in York. There are probably another 1,000 people living with sight loss who could benefit from the services we provide. Each person is an individual, with their own individual level of vision and needs.

- Some people will be affected by sight loss from birth, but the majority of people affected will lose sight in later life. 80% of our users are over 65
- Some people may lose their sight as the result of an accident or stroke, whilst illness can lead to conditions such as diabetic retinopathy.

Not everyone sees things the same – different eye conditions have different effects on vision.

- Being blind does not always mean seeing nothing at all, as most blind people can see something
- Some people have no central vision, whilst others have no vision to the sides
- Some people see a patchwork of blank and defined areas, others may see everything as a vague blur
- There are many causes of sight loss, such as Glaucoma, Diabetic Retinopathy, Retinitis Pigmentosa and Optic Atrophy, but the most common cause of sight loss is Age Related Macular Degeneration which results in a loss of central vision.

At YBPSS we understand the impact of sight loss, on the individual and their friends, families and carers. We want to help people adjust successfully to living with sight loss and then provide on going support as and when needed.

## **Our Equipment and Information Centre** continues to make an impact

**“I visited your centre last week as, being partially sighted myself, I wanted to see what help was available. I would like to say how pleased and grateful I was to receive the help and attention that I had from your staff.” (In a letter from a visitor)**

1,779 people visited our Centre last year, 210 of whom were first time visitors. The Centre is a gateway to all our services and is the only place of its kind in York.



Visitors use the Centre in many different ways:-

**As a source of information and support** – a place to talk about various eye conditions and the effects they have, discuss the benefits of registration as blind or partially sighted, or find out about local and national services.

**109 people were newly registered and added to our database, 10% more than last year. They all received an information pack and quarterly newsletter.**

**As a place to try out equipment that can help with doing everyday tasks independently**, like a talking microwave for safe and easy cooking, a white cane for safety outdoors, easy-to-see remote control and Big Print TV Guide, talking watches and over 200 other aids to choose from.

**81% of visitors surveyed said they bought something they could not get elsewhere.**

**Find ways to continue reading** – by making the best use of lighting, simple hand held magnifiers, or electronic devices that enlarge print onto a screen or convert it to speech, and large print, audio or Braille library services.

61% of visitors surveyed said they could now make better use of their remaining vision



**Somewhere to explore new technology**, such as mobile phones, boom boxes and other talking book machines, the Pen Friend audio label maker, audio description on TV and computers with speech.

In a recent survey

83% of visitors said the visit met their expectations  
35% said it **exceeded** their expectations  
96% said they would recommend it to other people

“Thank you for your help. My father now has a mobile phone he can use.” – June

“A great visit, thank you so much.” – Mary

“My husband greatly appreciated all that you did for people with macular degeneration and would like this donation to be used to further the help which the Society can give.” – Kathleen

## **By working with others** we make more of an impact

By working in partnership with other organisations we can bring more services and greater benefit to visually impaired people. For example

- We provide, on free loan, accessible radio and CD/MP3/SD card equipment through the British Wireless for the Blind Fund. This allows people on limited means to have equipment that they can use easily.
- The audio version of our newsletter is now recorded by BBC Radio York, a new partnership we are proud of. 1,000 people receive our newsletter every 3 months, in print, audio, computer and Braille formats.
- 160 subscriptions to the RNIB Talking Book service are provided through funding from the City of York Council. This allows people to choose the most appropriate library service for them.
- The Wilberforce Trust, The Falls Prevention Service, The Pension Service, The Partnership Group for People with A Physical and Sensory Impairment, and York Independent Living Network are just some of the local organisations we work with.
- We support and thank the York Theatre Royal and Grand Opera House audio description teams who work so hard to make theatre performances more enjoyable.
- Nationally, we work with RNIB, Action for Blind People, and Visionary (who link local sight loss charities).

## Helping people do what they want to do - our Volunteer Visiting Service

**Our 65 Volunteer Home Visitors have a very positive impact on the lives of the people they visit, as this story shows:-**

“Ken and I (Sam, his volunteer) have been working together on using his Kindle (e-book reader), setting it up, creating an account with Amazon, and learning the pattern of the keys. This helps Ken to be more independent when travelling – the other equipment he uses to read is not convenient to travel with. I regularly read to Ken, we have recently used YouTube to research things Ken is interested in, and we are currently researching a trip to Australia. Ken is in his 80s and registered partially sighted.”



Sam reads a menu to Ken

Ken says “Sam has a happy, patient and sympathetic personality which brightens my home every Tuesday. She helps me with things I would find very difficult to do on my own, and is a great advert for the much needed, much used Volunteer Service.”

Volunteers help in so many ways, always trying to improve the quality of life of the person they visit. They provide both practical and emotional support and understanding of the difficulties that living with sight loss can bring, particularly for

older people. Three of our clients are over 100, and 70% are over 80.

- Mary has very few opportunities to socialise and her volunteer really helps to reduce her isolation
- Sarah's volunteer Helen recently arranged new telephone charges to reduce her bill and allow her to talk for longer. She also helps with choosing audio books and reads aloud books that are not available in audio format, such as wartime recipes and history of York
- June's volunteer helps her deal with correspondence, shop for clothes and food, go out for a walk and write Christmas cards

**These are just a few examples of how our 65 volunteers, every week, help blind and partially sighted people do the things they want to do. Volunteers give around 6,500 hours a year to this service.**

**Our At Home Service helps people who can't come to our Equipment and Information Centre.**

George delivers equipment to people who cannot get to our Centre because of ill health or disability.



Three volunteers made 150 visits to people in their own homes, demonstrating new equipment and ensuring that people who cannot come to us can still receive a service.

All our volunteers receive training, on-going support and supervision from Harriet, our Volunteer Manager, and the service has Mentoring and Befriending Approved Provider status which will be renewed this coming year.

## **Making an impact in York Hospital Eye Clinic - supporting patients and staff**

**A diagnosis of permanent sight loss can impact on a person's life in many ways. Having the right support, at the right time, is vital if that impact is to be minimised.**

**Everyone who is concerned about changes in their vision will go through the Ophthalmology Department at York Hospital. This is where our service is located.**

Vanessa Camp, our Eye Clinic Liaison Officer, provided information and support to over 600 patients experiencing sight problems, an increase of 20% on the previous year.

Some patients were newly registered as blind or partially sighted, others have had impaired vision for many years.

George is 75 and was registered blind 12 years ago. He had always managed well, but now that he and his wife were getting older, they were beginning to find things more difficult but didn't know where to go for help.

Vanessa offered advice and practical help with lighting, and suggested they also visit YBPSS Equipment Centre. She made a referral to Age Concern for benefits advice and to the City of York Council for rehabilitation support.

A few weeks later, George and his wife called to say how grateful they were for all her help, and that they were now receiving benefits they never knew they were entitled to.

- **In a recent survey 67% of users said they would not have known where to get advice and information otherwise.**

- **All users said this service is an important part of hospital provision and would recommend it to others.**

People are often taken by surprise when they receive a diagnosis of permanent sight loss. It is important that they can be re-assured about the future, that they can talk to someone who understands the emotional and practical impact and who is independent of medical staff and family.

This is what some of our users say about the service.

“It is really important for people, especially elderly people who live alone, to have someone to talk to.’

“Doctors have so many patients and they don’t have time to go through things in detail. Vanessa had time to sit and talk with me. It was good for my well-being and state of mind.”

“What Vanessa did and said was wonderful.”

The service doesn’t just benefit patients – it also helps busy medical staff who want to provide the best support they can to their patients.

Vanessa also facilitates our Macular Degeneration Support Group which meets every 2 months at Holgate Villa. Its 60 members give and receive peer support, information and friendship, helping each other to live successfully with Macular Degeneration.

We are grateful to the North Yorkshire and York Primary Care Trust for providing funding for this service and recognising its integral role at York Hospital. We want to expand the service so that more patients can receive information, advice and support at the earliest opportunity.

## Helping people to learn new skills, improve confidence, and have fun our activities, support groups and open days

Thanks to funding from the Big Lottery Fund, we not only help with the practical aspects of living independently, but also help people have fun, meet new people, learn new skills, and very importantly, increase their confidence.

Belonging to a supportive group can have a very positive impact for members, sometimes in unexpected ways. For example, our Knit 'n' Natter Group

- helped all its members to increase their skills
- provided opportunities for some members to, in their own words, give something back to YBPSS by knitting for fundraising purposes and raising £600



Two members of the Knitting group with Ann, the organiser

This year, 160 people joined in with activity sessions and support group meetings. Here are some of their comments.

- “When I am with others with sight problems, I don’t feel as though I am a handicap as I might in other groups.”
- “It keeps me active and gives me a purpose for doing things and a purpose in life. I live alone so it’s nice to get out and among other people.”

- “I am a bit isolated as there is no public transport where I live. It is really beneficial to come out and socialise; it’s a cheering and invigorating experience and I go home feeling better.”

Ann, our activities organiser, and a team of volunteers, provided

- Knit 'n' Natter and Tactile Card making
- A Weekly Exercise Class
- A Walking Group
- A Book Group, reading audio books
- A Museums Group and WEA Local History course
- Theatre Trips to Audio Described productions
- An Insight Course for people who are newly visually impaired

Other staff members organised

- 6 meetings of our Macular Degeneration Support Group which has around 60 members
- The Action for Blind bus in Parliament Street, York, promoting local and national services to the public
- A Hi-Tech open day at Holgate Villa demonstrating CCTV readers and computer equipment
- A Digital Switchover Information Day to ensure that all our members are ready for the digital switchover in September 2011
- and a Christmas Lunch for members



# Blind and partially sighted people learn new computing skills

demonstrating the impact 1-to-1 tuition can have

Having little or no sight need not stop anyone from using a computer. With the right equipment, tuition, and motivation, our learners have achieved their aims – **to independently write letters, use email and use the internet.**

**As one of our learners said, “All my friends are OK with computers and I wanted to join the human race. A door I thought was closed is beginning to open.”**



Age is definitely not a barrier. 84% of our learners were over 60 and 17% were over 81.

Funding from the Big Lottery fund means we can provide

- one to one computer tuition
- computers that convert text to speech
- computers that enlarge characters and allow different colour combinations to make text easier to read
- large and well colour-contrasted keyboards
- a scanner that can scan personal letters and display the text on screen or convert it into speech
- a lap-top on loan for the duration of training



## **Volunteers and supporters increase our impact** - and ability to help more blind and partially sighted people

We are extremely lucky to have over 140 volunteers and supporters who give their time, enthusiasm, expertise and money to help us.

This year we have seen an increase in the numbers of people offering to help and many of those are visually impaired people themselves.

Muriel helps with office administration and reception 2 days a week



Many of our volunteers help with fundraising; others

- demonstrate and deliver equipment to people in their home, and publicise the Society
- post out 1,000 newsletters every three months in print, tape, CD and Braille formats
- ensure activities like our exercise class, walking group and book group run smoothly
- provide reception and office back up
- attend meetings to represent the views of blind and partially sighted people

Volunteers give thousands of hours a year and together we make a difference to the lives of people who live with sight loss. We are so lucky and are very grateful to each one of them for their continued help.

## **Successful fundraising has a real impact - on our ability to help people**

This year we raised £21,700 from a huge variety of community fundraising activities. We are proud of that success and the impact it has on our ability to provide services.

- £1,902 was collected in our pink elephant collecting boxes in shops and pubs
- £600 from Singing carols in Coppergate
- A tombola at the Shepherd Group Social Club Dinner Dance raised £300

A concert by the Aber Valley Welsh Male Voice Choir raised £1,740 and was enjoyed by a huge number of people.



**Fundraising volunteers are great people and have raised money in a host of different ways:-**

- £900 from a swimathon organised by Ian Wood
- £921 by eBay volunteers, thanks to the donation of lost property from McArthur Glen
- Bill Skipworth's piano recital raised £230
- £500 from knitting sold by our Knit 'n' Natter group
- Through researching and making trust applications

It's not possible to include all of our fundraising events and donations in this report, but we are equally grateful for each and every one of them.

# Donations from Trusts

We are extremely grateful to the many Trusts who have supported our work this year, most of whom are listed below. We value their willingness to help blind and partially sighted people in York, and to make it possible for us to provide the services we do.

A&S Burton

Arlish & Chambers

Molly Croysdale Charitable Trust

Charles & Elsie Sykes Trust

The Charles Brotherton Trust

York Common Good Trust

Norman Collinson Charitable Trust

Sylvia & Colin Shepherd Charitable Trust

Percy Bilton Trust, to refurbish our meeting room

Patricia & Donald Shepherd Charitable Trust

Dorothy Howard Trust

Beatrice Laing Trust

Jack Brunton Charitable Trust

George A Moore Foundation

Jules Thorn Charitable Trust

Lynn Foundation

Alcuin Lodge Freemasons

Sydney Black Charitable Trust

Francis Drake Lodge Freemasons



Volunteers singing carols in a local shopping centre

## **Personal donations mean a lot to us can you see your way to helping?**

**A legacy is a gift in a will and it is a way of making a donation without it costing anything in the person's lifetime.**

We were delighted to receive £30,216 in legacies this year, every penny of which we put into delivering services to blind and partially sighted people in York.

**Because we are a local organisation, money given to us here in York is spent on delivering services to people living in York.**

Our members are very generous people and we thank them for consistently supporting us. We received

- £6,239 in regular donations
- Donations in lieu of birthday presents and wedding anniversaries
- £2,676 as 'In Memoriam' donations

**Donations of time, expertise and encouragement are appreciated as much as financial donations.**

Could you volunteer to help us to continue to make an impact?

If you would like to make a donation or leave a gift in your will to YBPSS, please contact Diane Roworth, Chief Officer on 01904-731121. If you would like to make a donation of time or expertise, contact Harriet Bisson, Volunteer Manager.

Thank you, in great anticipation.

## **Staff and Committee Members**

The Executive Committee governs YBPSS; its members are the Trustees of the Charity. They are elected annually, by members, at the Annual General Meeting. 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 I Wood, Mr K Cameron, Ms S Cairns.

Members of staff were:- Diane Roworth, Chief Officer; Anna Harland, Services Manager; Harriet Bisson, Volunteer Manager; Deborah Wheller and Fiona Samuel, Equipment & Information Centre Officers; Stine Blowers, Community Fundraiser; Vanessa Camp, Eye Clinic Liaison Officer; Barbara Fairs, Office Manager; Alison Backhouse, Accounts & Talking Book Service; Ann Mattam, Activities Co-ordinator.

## **Accounts for April 2010 to March 2011**

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 2010/2011

<u>Income</u>	<u>2010/2011</u>	<u>2009/2010</u>
	£	£
<u>City of York Council</u>		
Volunteer Visiting Service	18,491	18,491
Equipment & Information Centre	20,536	20,536
Council Equipment Service	4,684	4,684
Talking Book Service	14,366	14,366
Stroke Project	2,000	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>60,077</b>	<b>58,077</b>
 <u>North Yorkshire and York PCT</u>		
Equipment & Information Centre	16,298	16,298
Eye Clinic Service	21,675	21,675
<b>Total</b>	<b>37,973</b>	<b>37,973</b>
<b>Total Service Agreements and Contracts</b>	<b><u>98,050</u></b>	<b><u>96,050</u></b>
 <u>Other Grants</u>		
Big Lottery Fund	24,966	34,082
<u>Other Income</u>		
Social Activities & 30 <sup>th</sup> Birthday Celebrations	1,630	2,512
Training, Services and Equipment Hire	1,552	702
E&I Centre Sales	17,191	16,463
Bank Interest & Other Income	4,998	6,094
Community Fundraising Income	21,740	24,739
Trusts (inc Meeting Room Refurbishment), Donations, Gift Aid	33,733	56,507
Legacies	30,218	12,631
<b>Total</b>	<b>136,028</b>	<b>153,730</b>
<b>Total Income</b>	<b><u>234,078</u></b>	<b><u>249,780</u></b>
Restricted	84,183	93,299
Unrestricted	149,895	156,481
	<b><u>234,078</u></b>	<b><u>249,780</u></b>

<b>Expenditure</b>	<u>2010/2011</u>	<u>2009/2010</u>
	£	£
Big Lottery Fund (see note1)	25,658	36,154
Salaries, NI & Pension	130,713	125,255
Staff Expenses (travel etc)	734	2,602
Volunteer Expenses (travel etc)	719	685
Office Expenditure (see note 2)	39,210	37,740
Recruitment and Advertising	1,451	810
Social Activities & 30 <sup>th</sup> Birthday Celebrations	1,876	1,075
Newsletter and Publications	2,300	3,280
Fundraising and Publicity	1,858	1,897
Talking Books Membership Subscriptions	12,620	12,219
Equipment & Information Centre Purchases	16,258	16,063
Council Equipment Purchases	2,269	3,023
Refurbishment of Meeting Room	6,929	-
Talking Signs & React Cards	608	-
Depreciation	-	911
Independent Examiner's Fee	1,698	1,449
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<u><b>237,170</b></u>	<u><b>243,163</b></u>
Restricted	84,742	96,396
Unrestricted	<u>152,428</u>	<u>146,767</u>
	<u><b>237,170</b></u>	<u><b>243,163</b></u>
Surplus/deficit for the financial year	(3,092)	6,617
Restricted	(559)	(2,722)
Unrestricted	<u>(2,533)</u>	<u>9,339</u>
	<u><b>(3,092)</b></u>	<u><b>6,617</b></u>

## Balance Sheet as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2011

	<u>2011</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2010</u>
Tangible Fixed Assets		-	-
Current Assets			
Stock	7,489		7,755
Cash at Bank & In Hand	110,595		112,652
Debtors	1,500		2,943
		119,584	123,350
Liabilities and Amounts falling due within one year			
Creditors and Accruals		4,187	4,861
		115,397	118,489
Total Assets less Current Liabilities		<b>115,397</b>	<b>118,489</b>
<b>Represented by</b>			
Restricted Funds (see note 3)		10,113	10,672
Designated Building Fund (see note 4)		51,290	51,290
Unrestricted Funds		53,994	56,527
		<b>115,397</b>	<b>118,489</b>

### **Notes to 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.

**York Blind and Partially Sighted Society**  
**1979 to 2010**  
**31 Years of Making an Impact**

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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**York Blind and Partially Sighted Society**

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The photographs on the front cover show

- One of our volunteer visitors with their client
- Diane Roworth, Chief Officer and Brian Smith, Honorary President in the sensory garden, Peaseholme Green
- A visitor using our Equipment and Information Centre
- Staff, volunteer and member at the Knit 'n' Natter Group

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