

EAST SUFFOLK ASSOCIATION FOR THE BLIND

NEWSLETTER

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THANKS TO OUR GENEROUS SUPPORTERS

As you will know, we send out an annual appeal to all of our members soon after each New Year seeking donations to help us as a charity continue providing the services that we offer to the visually impaired community in East Suffolk. Many of you generously responded to this request and we would like to extend our sincere thanks to you for your generosity, be it in the form of a one off donation or an ongoing standing order. It is much appreciated and you can be assured that the funds you donated all go towards benefitting visually impaired people who seek help and support from us.

CAN YOU HELP TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

A gift in your Will can help us to continue offering life-changing support to people suffering from all types of sight loss in East Suffolk.

ESAB has been able to make a vital difference to hundreds of visually impaired people in East Suffolk thanks to the generosity of those choosing to remember the Association in their Wills. In fact, without such gifts, it would be impossible for ESAB to continue to offer services at the level that it does. Each gift, whatever its size plays an incredibly important role in enabling the Association to continue helping visually impaired people who need our practical support.

Writing a Will may seem daunting, but once it's done, you can relax in the knowledge that your express wishes should be carried out after you're gone. By having a Will, you also ensure your belongings go to the people you wish them to. Once you've provided for your loved ones, it's also the perfect way to leave a gift to a charity or a cause that you believe in, such as ESAB, to help continue its good works.

When making or revising your Will, or perhaps by adding a Codicil to your existing Will, would you kindly consider including a gift (Bequest) to ESAB?

If you would like any guidance on how to help ESAB in this way, please feel free to contact the office on 01473 611011.

NOTICE OF OUR ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the East Suffolk Association for the Blind is to be held at the Woodbridge Town Football Club, Friday 21st July starting at 10.30am.

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

At the time of writing, one item of Any Other Business has been submitted. This item concerns the wishes of the ESAB Board of Trustees to convert ESAB from being an unincorporated charity to a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO), which is strongly recommended by the Charity Commission, as it not only provides better protection for the Trustees but also provides ESAB the correct legal status for owning and managing assets and employee contracts.

The resolution to be voted upon is:

That the ESAB applies to become a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) of the same name

- and, once the new CIO has been registered by the Charity Commission, all the undertakings, assets, liabilities, obligations, staff, volunteers and members of the current charity be transferred to the new CIO;
- and the Chair, Trustees and honorary officers of the CIO on the date that its registration by the Charity Commission takes effect shall be the same persons as are the Chair, Trustees and honorary officers of the ESAB on that date;
- and, once the transfer of all undertakings, assets, liabilities, obligations, staff, volunteers and members is complete, the original charity be dissolved.

BECCLIS EXHIBITION FOR VISUALLY IMPAIRED MEMBERS

The Association has arranged an exhibition aimed at anyone with a sight impairment to be held in Beccles at the Blyburgate Hall, Blyburgate NR34 9TF on the 21st June 2017 starting at 10am and going on until 3pm. The invited exhibitors are Opetelec (hand held and electronic magnifiers), Cobolt (large range of daily living aids), the RNIB, Blind Veterans UK, Guide Dogs for the Blind, British Wireless for the Blind, Sensing Change and Three Rivers Local

Talking Newspapers. Please do all that you can to take advantage of this opportunity to see and learn so much under one roof in one day. There will also be refreshments available throughout the day.

VOTING AT ELECTIONS

In January the RNIB launched their latest report, 'Turned Out 2016'. The report found that blind and partially sighted voters continue to face unacceptable barriers when exercising their democratic right to vote in secret. 'Turned Out 2016' is based on a survey that asked blind and partially sighted voters about their experiences in last May's local, regional and Mayoral elections and the European referendum in June.

By law, all polling stations are required to provide a tactile voting device and large print sample version of the ballot paper to assist blind and partially sighted voters. The survey found that often the tactile template was not available, or when it was, polling station staff didn't know how to use it.

The RNIB are calling on the Government to require polling stations to clearly display the procedure for enabling blind and partially people to vote. All staff need to know their legal responsibilities. Local councils and political parties should send any materials ahead of the election in formats that blind and partially sighted voters can access. More must also be done to find out how voters should be communicated with at the point of registering to vote.

GIANT CELL ARTERITIS

Every year in the UK, 3,000 people's sight is damaged by a condition called giant cell arteritis. The symptoms can appear very suddenly and end in irreversible blindness.

"My mother in law lost a lot of weight, she was in a very low mood, very painful scalp, jaw pain - and when I say painful scalp, brushing her hair became impossible," says Amanda Bartlett. Within the four hours that we were in eye casualty, towards the end she reached round her chair and grabbed my hand and said 'Amanda, I can't see anything.' And she lost her sight that afternoon."

Another woman tells me she felt "jaw ache, neck ache, earache and painful shoulders". It culminated in a "sort of flash in one eye, and I actually lost the sight in this eye for about three minutes".

At first, some people mistake the symptoms for a migraine - one describes it as "a cap of pain like my brain was being squeezed". But these are all classic signs of giant cell arteritis (GCA). It occurs when arteries in the head and neck become inflamed and giant cells accumulate in the artery walls. One of the arteries commonly affected provides blood to the optic nerve, which transmits information from the retina to the brain. Blocking the nerve and starving it of blood can cause permanent blindness. The window of treatment is small - in some cases, sight can be lost within days or even hours. The only thing that can save it is immediate treatment with steroids.

Red flags:

- Severe, often sudden headaches not relieved by painkillers - they tend to affect one side of the head or temples
- Tenderness to the head and scalp - brushing hair can be painful
- Swollen temporal arteries visible to the naked eye
- Jaw pain especially when talking and chewing
- Vision problems including double vision, blurred vision and sight loss in one or both eyes

The symptoms of GCA usually develop quickly but there may be earlier warning signs such as weight loss, day and night sweats, tiredness, mild fever, loss of appetite and depression. It is related to another, less serious, condition called polymyalgia rheumatica (PMR) which causes muscular pain and immobility. These illnesses can appear independently but often come together. GCA affects about a tenth of people with PMR in the UK mostly adults over 50 and is three times more common in women than in men. It's also seven times more common in white people than in black or Asian people.

In order to reduce the number of people losing their sight from GCA, the NHS has set up a new system to make sure people are diagnosed as quickly as possible. In some parts of the UK there are now dedicated phone lines so GPs can get patients an appointment with a rheumatologist within 24 hours. Anyone at risk

is then screened using ultrasound - if a patient has GCA, the scan will reveal a dark band, known as the halo sign, around the temporal artery.

But it's not just doctors who need to be aware of the signs of GCA everyone should heed the warning "Beware the patient who complains of their scalp hurting when combing their hair."

MACULAR SOCIETY - HOW THEY CAN HELP

They are the national charity for anyone affected by central vision loss. They provide free information and support to improve lives. They fund research so that one day we can overcome macular disease. You don't have to be a Macular Society member to use their services. Their services include:

Helpline – confidential advice and information on all aspects of macular disease, including diagnosis, treatment and living with central vision loss.

Counselling - It's natural to feel upset or angry when you're told you have a macular condition. Many people find it helps to talk, in confidence, to a professional counsellor.

Support Groups – they have a network of almost 300 local groups.

Befriending - Having a macular condition can leave you feeling isolated, especially if it's hard to get out and about. Your dedicated befriender will call regularly for a friendly, social chat about anything you like including, but not always, macular disease.

Advocacy – help accessing treatments.

Skills for seeing - training to make best use of remaining sight.

Treatment buddy – chat to people who've had treatment by injection for support and advice.

Charles Bonnet buddy- chat to others who've experienced visual hallucinations as a result of a macular condition.

To contact the **Macular Society** for help, please call **0300 3030 111** between 9am and 5pm Monday to Friday or via email at **help@macular society.org**

GUIDE DOGS BRINGS THE COMMUNITY CLOSER THROUGH MY GUIDE

Research shows 70,000 people in the UK who are blind or partially sighted never leave their home, due to loss of confidence.

Guide Dogs offer services which really change lives. My Guide is one of these services. My Guide is a volunteer led service which helps people with sight loss to get out of their homes and back into the community. One person who received help from My Guide is Maggie. She has suffered from a condition called Retinitis Pigmentosa from a young age – a condition that has caused her eyesight to gradually deteriorate. Her condition meant that she found it hard to continue in her job as a sewing machinist, and after her son was born she didn't return to work. As her condition became worse. Maggie found she was losing her confidence and was becoming increasingly housebound. The My Guide service stepped in, with the help of Dawn, who is a trained My Guide volunteer.

Maggie has now been able to build her confidence again. Maggie has joined a theatre group, Unseen Suffolk. Dawn helps Maggie to travel to the group and build her confidence on public transport. As well as help from a volunteer, Maggie has received training from Sensing Change, which teaches her to use a long cane, meaning she is now able to travel more independently. Dawn has helped Maggie to regain her independence and confidence. Not only has she joined the theatre group, she has also joined a support group. Maggie is now co-running the group and planning a wide range of social activities for next year. Maggie says, 'The sky really is the limit. Everything has snowballed as a result of My Guide with new opportunities emerging all the time.'

The service has not only been life changing for Maggie; it's enhanced volunteer Dawn's life too. She says the service has been 'life changing for both me and Maggie – it has changed her life so much and seeing Maggie grow in confidence has been amazing.'

If you would like to find out more about the My Guide service and volunteering in your community, please visit

www.guidedogs.org.uk/myguide or contact Kerry Matthews at **07825 905894** or email at Kerry.matthews@guidedogs.org.uk

DO I NEED A WHITE STICK AND WHERE CAN I GET ONE FROM?

No, you don't necessarily need a white stick if you are blind or partially sighted, although many people do find them very useful.

There are three main types of white sticks or canes. The first type is called a symbol cane and you simply hold it rather than use it to find obstacles in front of you. As the name suggests, it's a way of letting other people know that you're blind or partially sighted. It's particularly useful in busy or crowded places as other people who see the cane should take a bit more care not to bump into you. You might also find that you get more offers of assistance from staff and members of the public because they can see that you have sight loss more easily.

The second type is called a guide cane and you use it to find obstacles in front of you. You hold it diagonally across your body and then use it to find obstacles such as kerbs or steps.

The third type is called a long cane and people who have been trained to use one roll or tap it from side to side, as they walk, to find their way and avoid obstacles.

Red and white banded canes of all types are available and these indicate that someone has a hearing impairment as well as sight loss.

If you need help getting out and about with a white stick, we recommend you start by contacting your Community Worker or the office on 01473 611011 who will be able to refer you to Sensing Change. They should be able to provide you with a cane for free and, if you need a guide or long cane, give you mobility training so that you know how to use one to get about safely.

HAVE YOU EVER HEARD OF THE SILVER LINE CHARITY?

The Silver Line operates the only confidential, free helpline for older people across the UK that's open 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The helpline number is: **0800 4 70 80 90**.

They also offer:

- telephone and letter friendship schemes where they match volunteers with older people based on their interests

- facilitated group calls; and
- help to connect people with local services in their area.

The Silver Line Helpline

The Silver Line is the only confidential, free helpline for older people across the UK open every day and night of the year. Their specially-trained helpline team:

- Offer information, friendship and advice.
- Link callers to local groups and services.
- Offer regular friendship calls.
- Protect and support older people who are suffering abuse and neglect

68% of calls to the helpline are made at night and weekends.

Who can call the helpline?

The Silver Line is a helpline for older people. They have no strict age limits but most people they speak to are over 60. So, if you think it's for you, it's for you.

All helpline calls are free

The Silver Line Helpline is free to callers. All costs of calls are covered by The Silver Line. They rely entirely on donations from organisations and people who care about the welfare and safety of older people. All helpline calls are confidential

The Silver Line is a confidential helpline.

Callers are free to express their feelings, and describe their lives honestly, and can trust them to respect their privacy. In cases of abuse or neglect, with the callers' permission, they will involve specialist safeguarding organisations such as Action on Elder Abuse or the appropriate social services team.

Silver Line Telephone Friends

If callers would like to be put in touch with a Silver Line Friend, they can enjoy a regular weekly friendship telephone call. Silver Line Friends are volunteers who have contacted The Silver Line because they enjoy talking to older people. Calls are free for both parties, as costs are covered by The Silver Line through donations. They match the older person to like-minded volunteers, based on their interests and preferences. It is not a counselling service and Silver Line Friends will not meet, or know the telephone numbers of the people they speak to.

Silver Letters

Telephone friendship schemes are not suitable for everyone. They created the Silver Letters scheme for people who are hearing impaired, and would like a Silver Line Friend, as well as those who just prefer the written word. Silver Letters are a regular exchange of correspondence between an older person and a Silver Line Friend. All postage is free for both parties, and sent via their mail centre, so costs are covered by The Silver Line. They match older people to like-minded volunteers. It is not a counselling service and Silver Line Friends will not meet or know the address of the people they write to.

Silver Circles

Silver Circles are facilitated group telephone calls where people with shared interests can discuss topics that interest them with a wider group. This is enjoyed by people who would like to speak with more than one person at a time. Calls are free for people taking part, as costs are covered by The Silver Line.

Silver Line Connects

The Silver Line Connects team provides older people with more intensive support, advice, and help with connecting to local services. Since launching in November 2015, the team has worked on issues ranging from housing and health issues, to finding lunch clubs and even financial concerns.

People can be referred but to do so, it has to be done by downloading and filling in a referral form from their web site at wellbeing@thesilverline.org.uk. Permission needs to be sought first from the person who is being referred in order for your form to be processed. The Helpline number is **0800 470 80 90**.

ABOUT THE EAST ANGLIAN SAILING TRUST (EAST)

The East Anglian Sailing Trust offer yacht sailing taster days and taster weekends from Suffolk Yacht Harbour near Ipswich. The sailing takes place on a variety of yachts from 30 feet to 40 feet in length. All EAST crew are volunteers. Captains are not paid for the use of their boats but they are insured for sailing with visually impaired people and all crew are VI awareness trained (by East Suffolk Association for the Blind).

Anyone who wishes to have such a sailing experience can attend either as individuals or a group. No previous experience is necessary. For those who would be on board overnight, individual berths are provided for privacy. Taster days are free but a nominal charge is made for weekends (£25 a day) to cover fuel, food and mooring.

Those who wish to give it a try can either make their own way to the Suffolk Yacht Harbour near Ipswich, or EAST can arrange to meet you at Ipswich Railway Station and provide transport to the harbour.

EAST has risk assessments and guidance/policy notes for the care of visually impaired crew. Life jackets are provided.

Their Cruising Section chairman is Simon Daws, who himself is visually impaired. He would be very happy to talk to anybody with questions or in need of reassurance. He can be contacted by phone at **07749 714361**. You could also visit their web site at www.e-a-s-t.org.uk.

HISTORY OF TALKING NEWSPAPERS AND MAGAZINES

In 1968, senior librarian Ronald Sturt went on a study visit to Västerås in Sweden. The library there had, with the local association for the blind, started a talking newspaper, "Arosbandet". Weekly recordings were sent on an open-spool system to 130 'readers' on a three-day loan basis. The Swedish initiative was designed 'not only for the blind but also mentally retarded children and adults who would never be able to read'. Swedish law dictated that those who needed them were entitled to talking book machines. Ronald was hugely impressed.

He returned to Aberystwyth, where he was on the staff of the College of Librarianship Wales, and he talked enthusiastically about what he'd seen to anyone who cared to listen. Several members of the local Round Table were very interested in promoting the idea in the UK and offered to meet the cost of investigation and experimentation. The Round Table held a Donkey Derby to raise funds, and met on 1st September 1969 to discuss their ideas. The concept instantly commanded the support of people of business or professional standing, who readily volunteered their experience and expertise to help the project. These volunteers included a

consultant ophthalmologist, a newspaper proprietor, a recording engineer, a broadcasting journalist, a bank officer with engineering training, the Round Table chairman (an insurance manager), the National Librarian, a blind 'reader' who managed a newspaper depot, and Ronald Sturt. They gave themselves four months to launch the scheme.

A budget was set for a recording and high-speed copying studio. Using expert advice and precise costs from the Director of the RNIB Talking Book service in London they drafted a constitution in close consultation with the Charity Commission. They gained recognition by the Head Postmaster in order to use the first class freepost facilities of the Articles for the Blind convention. They also engaged, albeit warily, the support of the Social Services manager who wrote to those blind people he thought would respond to recordings of the local news.

And so, in January 1970, one of the first Talking Newspapers was born. Tape cassettes dropped through the letterboxes of twenty blind people in Cardiganshire. The idea caught on and, slowly but surely, Talking Newspapers began to spring up in other parts of the country. By 1974, there were enough to warrant the formation of a national membership body, the Talking Newspaper Association of the United Kingdom (TNAUK). Its objectives were to unite and serve the growing number of active local Talking Newspapers and to stimulate their creation to reach every blind reader in the four nations who wanted to keep in touch with the local community. The reach of talking newspapers was extended in August 1983 with the advent of the National Service, based in Heathfield, East Sussex.

From modest beginnings, with just the Sunday papers being recorded in a small room above the Oxfam Shop in Heathfield High Street, the service gradually expanded to the substantial operation it is today. Eight studios, fifty staff, 230 volunteers and a battery of high-speed copiers enable over 230 publications to be recorded onto tape, creating an output of around two million cassettes each year. In recent years they've also seen the development of the national electronic service. This means that TNAUK can now transcribe publications into formats suitable for use with computers equipped with screen readers, voice synthesizers and/or text magnifiers. Delivery times have been greatly speeded up and there

are now a number of blind and partially sighted people who receive and browse their daily newspapers more quickly than sighted readers!

In 2004 a decision was taken to restructure TNAUK. It was agreed that the membership association role should be handed over to a newly formed organisation, the Talking News Federation. This meant that TNAUK could concentrate entirely on running the National Service and its commercial subsidiary, Sound Talking. The organisations separated on March 31, 2005 and TNAUK was ready to enhance its unique position as national newsagent for the blind and partially sighted section of the population. Then in February 2010 National Talking Newspapers and Magazines officially joined the RNIB Group which brings you up to date.

JOIN THE RNIB TELEPHONE BOOK CLUB

Did you know that RNIB runs telephone book groups throughout the UK? Two community members tell us how the groups work and why they love being involved.

Olive Bligdon lives near Aberdeen, is registered blind with retinitis pigmentosa and facilitates a book group. "We discuss our favourite authors, books and what we love about reading. There are six sessions for each book group, with around eight people in each. The members choose two books to talk about, from a choice of six. I like being a facilitator as I get to meet people and find out what they enjoy about different types of books. You hear opinions from a range of people, and it makes you think, 'maybe I'll check that book out.' That's what it's all about. If you're like myself, who loves books and wants to discuss them, but has got nobody else in the family who enjoys books like I do, then it's a great way of being able to speak to other folk who have got the same enjoyment in such a pastime.

If you want to join a group, it's simple. Just get in touch with the RNIB Talk and Support team, details further down. They will phone you once a month - very easy - everybody's relaxed."

Cliff Corbett lives in Essex, has Macular Degeneration and joined RNIB seven years ago. "I'm in a group with six other people. I thoroughly enjoy it and I think they do too. We do discuss books,

but we also get to know what books people like, and from that you can perhaps judge a little of the person you're speaking to. It was particularly difficult for me initially, because I knew of no authors - reading was a completely new venture for me. But eventually I came to read Wilbur Smith and PD James. I'm reading what you might consider 'men's books', but I'm still exploring and have recently read a few of what I would call books on the feminine side. If you're wondering what this book club is all about, I'd say, join and find out for yourself!"

If hearing about this has inspired you to join a telephone book group, it's quick, easy and free of charge for RNIB Connect members. Just call the **RNIB Talk and Support team** on **020 739 12218** or email **talkandsupport@rnib.org.uk**

CATCH-UP TV IS CATCHING UP TO AUDIO DESCRIPTION

Did you know catch-up TV has almost no audio description, unlike broadcast TV? The RNIB, along with other charities, has been working to persuade the Government to make audio description on catch-up TV a requirement by law. So they are delighted that the Government has now agreed to add an amendment to the Digital Economy Bill which will require audio description, subtitles and sign language on video on-demand services.

What happens next?

This amendment to the law paves the way for audio described programmes appearing on catch-up TV, but it will take around a year for the regulator and the industry to start putting it into practice. Throughout this, the RNIB will continue to ensure the changes happen as quickly and as effectively as possible. They expect the availability of audio described programmes to start increasing on catch-up TV during 2018.

GETTING A TV LICENCE

You need to be covered by a TV Licence to watch or record live TV programmes on any channel, or download or watch BBC programmes on iPlayer. This could be on any device, including a TV, desktop computer, laptop, mobile phone, tablet, games console, digital box or DVD/VHS recorder. If you do any of these

without a valid licence, you risk prosecution with a maximum penalty of up to £1,000, plus any legal costs and/or compensation you may be ordered to pay. You will also still have to buy a TV Licence if you need one.

How can I buy a TV Licence?

There are lots of different ways to buy a TV Licence. Whether that's through weekly cash payments, using your nearest PayPoint outlet, spreading the cost with monthly, quarterly or yearly direct debit, credit/debit card or by post – just choose the one that suits you best.

Could I get a concession?

Are you, or is someone you live with:

- **75 years old or older?** You are eligible to apply for a free Over 75 TV Licence. Call 0300 790 6112 with your National Insurance number to hand.
- **74 years old?** You can apply for a short-term TV Licence to cover you until your 75th birthday. Call 0300 790 6112 to find out more.
- **Blind and can provide the appropriate evidence?** You are eligible to apply for a 50% blind concession on your TV Licence if you are severely sight impaired (blind). If you are partially sighted (sight impaired) you are not eligible. To apply, it can be done online at www.tvlicensing.co.uk/blind or you can post a photocopy of your document of blind registration or a certificate from your ophthalmologist with your licence number, phone number and cheque payment to TV Licensing, Blind Concession Group, Darlington DL98 1TL.

BE MY EYES APP FOR SMARTPHONES

If you're blind there are times in your day that may call for some vision – reading a street sign, navigating your surroundings, train timetables, instruction manuals, recipes, and of course food expiry dates. But what if there's no one around to lend a hand or you've exhausted your usual hit-list of helpers?

Enter the Be My Eyes app which makes life easier for anyone with sight problems by connecting sighted and blind users via video messaging. The non-profit project was invented by partially sighted

Hans Jørgen Wiberg who wanted to create a simple way for blind people to seek help. “It only takes a minute to choose the right tin can from the shelf or find the right thing to eat in the fridge, but for visually impaired individuals smaller tasks in their home can often become bigger challenges,” says Wiberg. “By working together on Be My Eyes they are able to solve the problem that the blind person is facing and make their life that little bit easier.”

Blind users can use the app to request help from a sighted person. As soon as the first sighted user accepts the request for help a live audio-video connection will be set up between the two and the sighted user can tell the blind person what he or she sees when the blind user points his or her phone at something using the rear-facing camera.

As a sighted user you don't need to worry about missing a call and 'leave a blind person hanging' - you are a part of the bigger Be My Eyes helper-network which will find the next available sighted person in the network.

The beauty of the app lies in the fact that the benefits are binary; if you're blind you get help in real-time, while as a volunteer you can enjoy the satisfaction of helping someone in a really convenient way.

Be My Eyes is all about contributing to and benefiting from small acts of kindness, so hop on board and get involved! Blind users are encouraged to be patient when requesting help because it relies on real people to help you.

You can download from the App Store, after which you register your language and whether you are a helper or a visually impaired user.

Please note that this app is only available for Apple phones at the moment. An Android version is in development and should be available soon. You can find out more by visiting the Be My Eyes website at <http://bemyeyes.com/>.

SYNAPPTIC - WHY NOT GIVE TECHNOLOGY A TRY?

Fancy pulling a mobile phone out of your pocket and using it to read bus timetables or magnify food labels in the supermarket or using your tablet as a reading machine for your favourite book? It's all

possible with Synapptic! If you've not heard of Synapptic before, they are a North-east company who design innovative and intuitive technology for people with sight loss, which works on mainstream Android Phones and Tablets. Their mission is to keep things simple and encourage everyone to give technology a try, while bringing together the latest innovations to help make life easier for people with sight loss. Their products come with a lifetime of free technical support, so their customers know they'll never be left on their own if they need some help.

Synapptic is essentially specialist software for Android mobile phones and tablets, so you can either buy the software on its own to use on any Android mobile phone or tablet that you own or you can buy a complete system from Synapptic. You will get an hour's free training from the supplier with your order. Synapptic software offers easy-to-follow menus, large high-contrast text, voice control and clear speech feedback making the phone effortless to use. The advantages of Synapptic software is that all its features work in the same easy-to-use way, so once you've mastered one feature, you've mastered them all!

Features of Synapptic software include Memory Stick Talking Book reader to listen to RNIB talking books or newspapers and music or any other content played from a memory stick, Magnification, Speech, Voice Control, Emails, Websites, Skype, Address Book, Calendar, Alarm Clock, Notepad, Voice Memos, Camera, CCTV Electronic Magnifier, Reading Machine, GPS Where Am I, Calculator, Torch, MP3 Player, Internet Radio, Freeview TV, BBC iPlayer, YouTube, RSS News feeds and more!

It has all the features of a handheld digital magnifier! You can use it to capture images and either magnify and view, or save to view later. Any image can be magnified on-screen by a whopping 100 times, using their new 'pinch and zoom' feature, so you can read signs, food labels, bus timetables and even menus when you're out and about. What's more, any text can be automatically converted to speech, so it can be read out and even saved for later. In fact, using one of their stands to hold your device, you could also use this feature at your desk for reading letters or even viewing photos.

Another feature they have included is a weather forecast option, bringing you accurate weather forecasts and current weather details for anywhere in the world. It also recently includes an all-new Eccentric Reading mode where text can be scrolled automatically across the screen and you get to control the speed and size.

The software purchased separately is priced at £190 plus VAT. Smartphones with Synapptic software start at £235 plus VAT and tablets with Synapptic software start at £330 plus VAT.

You can visit their website at www.Synapptic.com for more details or you can contact them on 0191 909 7 909 or email them at sales@Synapptic.com where they are happy to provide you with a trial version before purchase.

NEW ONE POUND COIN



Described as “the most secure coin in the world” here are a few facts about this new edition to our loose change, as well as it’s soon to vanish counterpart:

1. With 1 in 30 of our current “round pounds” believed to be fake this new design has a built in hidden security feature to make it difficult to counterfeit – obviously the Royal Mint haven’t released specific details but it is thought to involve materials inside the coin which can be detected electronically when scanned by coin-counting or payment machines.
2. This new coin’s 12 sided rim is inspired by the design of the 12-sided three-penny bit which went out of circulation in 1971.
3. The government estimates that there is £1.3 billion worth of loose change stashed away in piggy banks across the UK a third of which is believe to be £1 coins – that’s more than £430 million.

4. Another security feature of this new design is a latent image, which when looked at from one angle displays the £ symbol and when looked at from another angle displays the number 1.
5. The portrait of Her Majesty the Queen is her 5th portrait to be included on a coin.
6. The 'tails' side of the coin was designed by 15 year old David Pearce from Walsall and includes a Rose, a Leek, a Thistle and a Shamrock to represent each of the 4 parts of the UK.
7. The current 'round pound' was first launched in 1983 and there are currently 2.2 billion of them in circulation (equating to the weight of 6000 elephants).

Do not forget that the old coins cease to be legal tender beyond the 15th of October 2017, so if you have any in a charity collecting box or tin, they need to be passed to the charity before October.

NEW ACCESSIBLE ATM LOCATOR APP LAUNCHED

Leading sight loss charity Thomas Pocklington Trust has been working with LINK on a fully accessible smart phone app which will enable visually impaired people to locate ATMs more easily.

LINK, the UK's cash machine (ATM) network, has launched a GPS-enabled ATM locator app which is designed to help people with visual impairment and other disabilities to easily locate ATMs based on their access needs.

The Thomas Pocklington Trust was embedded in the app development process with LINK, providing expert feedback to the developers at each stage to ensure the app would be fully accessible. The charity also organised extensive testing to ensure the app was accessible with VoiceOver and TalkBack screen readers on both iOS and Android platforms.

The app allows users to set up filters to find ATMs that cater to different needs, including:

- ATMs with audio assistance,
- ATMs that are wheelchair accessible
- ATMs that dispense £5 notes
- ATMs that provide mobile recharge services

- ATMs that enable pin management
- ATMs that are free to use.

The app also enables people to find ATMs close to their location and perform postcode-based searches in order to find ATMs at another location. Users can send feedback via the app and report ATMs that do not offer the services stated in the app, allowing LINK to keep the database up-to-date and to fix issues.

Cash remains an essential part of our lives and is still the most attractive payment option for many of us in lots of situations. The new free app will make finding an ATM more convenient for everyone and, with its search filters, make it easier for vulnerable consumers to draw out their cash safely, and for anyone who wants to find ATMs that dispense £5 notes.

GET HELP WITH YOUR TAX FROM RNIB

Many people find tax matters confusing, but there is help available. RNIB has a team who support people with sight loss with income tax issues. The service, supported by HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC), provides information about tax allowances such as the Blind Person's Allowance and the Marriage Allowance, which can reduce your tax bill. They can help you to claim the tax allowances you are entitled to. In most cases, claims can be taken over the phone, with no forms to complete.

RNIB can also help with general queries related to income tax, tax-free savings, VAT-free products and tax credits. The team can contact HMRC if you need help with resolving problems and to arrange help with completing tax forms and self-assessment tax returns.

What is the Blind Person's Allowance?

People registered as blind or severely sight impaired can claim the Blind Person's Allowance. The allowance is £2,290. This can reduce tax by £458 this year. You can backdate the allowance to the previous 4 years. You can also transfer the allowance to your husband, wife or civil partner.

What is the Marriage Allowance?

The Government introduced the Marriage Allowance tax-break in 2015. It lets you and your partner share part of your tax-free Personal Allowance to help lower your overall tax bill. In 2016/17 you can transfer £1,100 of your Personal Allowance to your partner which can save up to £220 in tax. To apply for the Marriage Allowance you need to be married or in a civil partnership. Both partners need to be born on or after 6 April 1935. One partner needs to have an income of under £11,000, and the other partner must be a basic rate taxpayer.

For help and information on income tax and HMRC-related issues you can call RNIB on **0345 330 4897** or **0151 702 5721**

BT'S FREE SERVICE TO CRACK DOWN ON NUISANCE CALLS

BT has had a massive response from customers to the launch of BT Call Protect, its new free service to crack down on nuisance calls, with more than two million households using the new service in a just under three months. This service which is the first of its kind in the UK, combining network intelligence with the ability for customers to control the calls they receive, either from their home phone or online, enabling home phone customers to divert unwanted calls that regularly pester them, such as personal accident claims and PPI, to a junk voicemail box.

BT estimates that since its launch in January 2017, BT Call Protect has drastically reduced the number of nuisance calls reaching customers by diverting 65 per cent of those calls into its junk voicemail box. They are encouraging even more customers to sign up for the free service to help it find and prevent more nuisance callers in the future. They estimate that if all of its customers signed up to BT Call Protect it could divert 1.6 billion nuisance calls a year. It is thought that PPI and accident claims companies alone are responsible for 800 million of these calls.

It harnesses huge computing power to analyse large amounts of live data enabling experts at BT's centre in Shropshire to identify rogue numbers that make enormous quantities of calls and add them to the BT blacklist. It proactively diverts top offending nuisance calls before they even reach customers, unlike reactive

blocking where the calls reach the customer and the numbers are changed frequently to avoid detection. Customers can add calls that are not captured by the technology to their personal blacklist by simply dialling 1572 or going online after receiving a call. Customers are making more than 80,000 calls a week to BT Call Protect's 1572 number to add numbers to their personal blacklist or to change their settings or check their voicemail.

When large numbers of customers identify troublesome numbers they wish to divert, they are also added to the BT blacklist. Customers can also set BT Call Protect to divert whole categories of calls, such as international calls or those from withheld numbers into the junk voicemail.

If you would like to sign up for this service please call BT on **0800 800 150**

PRIORITY PHONE REPAIRS

All the phone companies have a priority repair service for the visually impaired and deaf. This should mean that any problem with your telephone landline is fixed sooner. However, it does vary depending on where you are a customer. You may be required to complete a form that will need the signature of your GP, nurse or social worker. For example, with Virgin Media you will need to contact their billing department and request the form for their Priority Fault Repair Service to be sent to you. BT have a similar service and you can begin by contacting them at 0800 800 150.

UK POWER NETWORKS PRIORITY SERVICE REGISTER

Power cuts don't happen very often but if the electricity network is damaged or develops a fault it is UK Power Networks job to get your power back on. Their engineers will work around the clock to restore power as quickly and as safely as possible. Being on their Priority Services Register will ensure you will receive extra support if you experience a power cut. This extra support is free to customers who qualify.

What help should you expect to get during a power cut?

✓ A priority number that you can call 24 hours a day

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

Who can register to receive this extra support?

- Customers who rely on medical equipment
- Customers who are chronically ill
- Customers with a disability
- Customers who have dementia
- Customers who are blind or partially sighted
- Customers who are deaf or hard of hearing
- Customers who are of pensionable age
- A nursing or residential home
- Customers with children under five in their household
- Any other case that you would like us to consider

To register for the UK Power Networks Priority Service please call **0800 169 9970**

CONTROL YOUR SMARTPHONE WITH YOUR VOICE

Modern technology often seems to require a high degree of manual dexterity. But for many who live with physical difficulties and loss of dexterity, the small buttons and touch-screen pads that come with many phones and communication devices can seem frustrating. Fortunately, today's digital age means that a lot of people are finding everyday life is getting easier by the development of voice recognition technology. There's a wide range of sophisticated software, apps and devices that are activated by voice command - for everyone, with or without disabilities.

Take innovations like Siri, Apple's intelligent personal digital assistant. Siri works hands free across a range of Apple devices, with the iOS device controlled just by speaking. Siri does what you say, finds the information you need and answers you.

It's much more than just voice recognition though, not only does it translate audible sounds into text, but it understands basic commands and questions, and allows you to control your phone.

For instance, you can tell Siri to set an alarm by just speaking the desired time and date without having to fiddle around doing it yourself. As Siri recognises natural speech, you can talk to your phone as you would to a person. You don't have to type anything. You can tell Siri to set a reminder, dictate and send text and emails, make a call, ask for directions or get the time in Hong Kong. It's useful for when you need information in a hurry, like checking the weather and what the traffic is like around your current location. Or perhaps you'd like to know what restaurants are nearby.

Voice recognition technology is rapidly growing, changing how we live our everyday lives. Siri is just one example of how this technology is becoming more accessible and can mean greater convenience and independence for people with disabilities.

ZOOM ON THE IPAD, IPHONE, AND IPOD TOUCH

Zoom can be especially helpful in enabling visually impaired persons to use mobile devices such as the iPad, iPhone, and iPod touch. Zoom for iOS magnifies the entire screen from 200% up to 500% and works seamlessly with any application. It can make it easier to read email, type on a small keypad, purchase apps, and manage settings.

You can enable Zoom during your initial device setup using iTunes, or activate it later through the "Settings" icon on the Home screen. To activate Zoom, press "Settings" followed by "General" followed by "Accessibility" followed by "Zoom." On the Zoom screen, touch and slide the white "Off" button (beside the word "Zoom") to the right. Once in the "On" position, the button turns blue.

Once Zoom is activated, a double-tap with three fingers magnifies the screen to 200%. To increase magnification to as much as 500%, double-tap and then drag three fingers up or down. If you magnify the screen beyond 200%, Zoom automatically returns to that magnification level the next time you zoom in. Once zoomed in, drag or flick with three fingers to move around the screen. Once you start dragging, you can use just one finger. All of the standard iOS gestures -- flick, pinch, tap, and rotor -- still work when the screen is magnified.

A LITTLE BIT OF HUMOUR

The Satnav – by Pam Ayres

I have a little Satnav, it sits there in my car
A Satnav is a driver's friend it tells you where you are.
I have a little Satnav, I've had it all my life
It's better than the normal ones, my Satnav is my wife.
It gives me full instructions, especially how to drive
"It's sixty miles an hour", it says, "You're doing sixty five".
It tells me when to stop and start, and when to use the brake
And tells me that it's never ever, safe to overtake.
It tells me when a light is red, and when it goes to green
It seems to know instinctively, just when to intervene.
It lists the vehicles just in front, and all those to the rear
And taking this into account, it specifies my gear.
I'm sure no other driver, has so helpful a device
For when we leave and lock the car, it still gives its advice.
It fills me up with counselling, each journey's pretty fraught
So why don't I exchange it, and get a quieter sort?
Ah well, you see, it cleans the house, makes sure I'm properly fed
It washes all my shirts and things, and keeps me warm in bed!
Despite all these advantages, and my tendency to scoff,
I only wish that now and then, I could turn the buggger off.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Here is a perfect example of the English language and the English sense of humour especially for English Language Lovers.

Can anyone tell the difference between 'Completed' and 'Finished'?

No dictionary has ever been able to define the difference between 'Complete' and 'Finished.' However, at a linguistic conference, held in London, Thulaseedharan B an Indian British was the clever winner. He defined it as follows:

When you marry the right woman, you are 'Complete. If you marry the wrong woman, you are 'Finished.' And, when the right woman catches you with the wrong woman, you are 'Completely Finished.'

His answer received a five minute standing ovation.

AND FINALLYA SHAKESPEARIAN INFLUENCE

400 years after his death you'd be hard pressed to find someone who hasn't heard of at least one of William Shakespeare's masterpieces. But did you know that many of the phrases we use today were first introduced by the Bard? Listed below are some favourites.

"For goodness sake" - *Henry VIII*

"Eaten out of house and home" - *Henry IV, Part II*

"All's well that ends well" - *All's Well That Ends Well*

"With bated breath" - *The Merchant of Venice*

"A wild goose chase" - *Romeo and Juliet*

"A heart of gold" - *Henry V*

"Dead as a doornail" - *Henry VI, Part II*

"Naked truth" - *Love's Labour's Lost*

"Send him packing" - *Henry IV*

"Vanish into thin air" - *Othello*

"Own flesh and blood" - *Hamlet*

"There's method in my madness" - *Hamlet*

"Wear your heart on your sleeve" - *Othello*

"Full circle" - *King Lear*

"All of a sudden" - *The Taming of the Shrew*

GREAT QUOTATIONS

In my many years I have come to a conclusion that one useless man is a shame, two is a law firm and three or more is a government.

John Adams

If you don't read the newspaper you are uninformed, if you do read the newspaper you are misinformed.

Mark Twain

I contend that for a nation to try to tax itself into prosperity is like a man standing in a bucket and trying to lift himself up by the handle.

Winston Churchill

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

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

The exhibitors who will be there include:

Optelec – electronic readers	Optelec - magnifiers
Calibre Talking Books	East Suffolk Association for Blind
Cobolt Daily Living Aids	Blind Veterans (UK)
Guide Dogs for the Blind	Sound On Talking Newspapers

EVENT DETAILS ARE:

FRIDAY 27TH OCTOBER 10am to 3.00pm

**WOODBIDGE COMMUNITY CENTRE
STATION ROAD
WOODBIDGE IP12 4AU**

**LIGHT REFRESHMENTS WILL BE
AVAILABLE**

Please contact your Community Worker Lesley Hodgkiss on 01473 611650 if you would like help in organising transport.