



Oxfordshire
Association for the Blind

Newsletter

August 2018

A note from the Chair

It is with some sadness that I have to announce to you that Colin Cure decided in early May of this year that it is time to move on. Colin has been Director of OAB since March 2007. He was appointed after a period of some turmoil in OAB's history when as well as the sad loss of Lou Cummins, we were confronted with losing our premises at the Rivermead Hospital site. Following a series of holding operations, Colin joined us as a highly experienced leader in all matters VIP. His time at our opposite number in Surrey prepared him well for his role at OAB. Since his appointment, he has coordinated the resuscitation of an ailing organisation at an operational level and has also been instrumental, along with Trustees, in seeing the provision of our new

premises in the Abingdon Road and its subsequent extension to house the Campoli Resource Centre.

The Trustees are for ever grateful for Colin's calm and professional approach to the management of OAB during his time as Director. His unfailing attention to our 2020 Strategic Plan has meant that we have progressed at a faster and more effective pace than ever before.

The Trustees have progressed with the appointment of a successor to Colin and I'm pleased to announce the appointment of Clare Pearce. Meanwhile, we wish Colin and Diane well for the future and please be assured we will mark his departure with an event directly after the AGM on the afternoon of 11th September. Do save the date.

With very best wishes to all and enjoy this glorious summer weather.

David Warr

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*Judith receiving her
British Citizens Award
with Michael
Underwood and Pat
Egan*

It's been a privilege

Time passes so quickly doesn't it? I remember arriving at OAB one March morning 11 years ago to a very warm welcome. Now the time has come for me to move to pastures new. That warmth has been there all those years – all the friendship, kindness and sense of purpose that I've come to think of as the OAB family.

It's been a privilege to be the director of OAB and I'd like to thank everyone who has helped me and OAB during those years. I'd also like to welcome my successor, Clare Pearce. I'm sure that she will benefit from all of that kind support as she gets to know everyone.

It's nice to be leaving on "a bit of a high". It was lovely attending the Oxfordshire Voluntary Awards, with Margaret Simpson (our trustee and Chair of Oxtalk, the Oxford Talking Newspaper) to receive our award for Partnership Working with Oxtalk. At those same awards, our Jean Mander, leader of the Thame group, received two awards: one for all her wonderful

volunteer work in Thame and especially with the group and, in addition, a long service award. As if that wasn't enough, you may have heard on Radio 4 recently, our Judith Wood, Counsellor and Senior Sight Advisor, receiving the "All in the Mind" national award for exceptional service in the field of mental health. The award was presented by programme host Claudia Hammond and double Olympic champion, Dame Kelly Holmes. As I write, Judith is also preparing to go to the Palace of Westminster to receive the highly prestigious British Citizen's Award. I'm delighted that Judith's marvellous work has been acknowledged in this way and I'd like to pay tribute to all the team of all of their excellent work for the benefit of sight impaired people in the county. I'm not leaving OAB completely. I've decided to become a volunteer home visitor, joining our wonderful team of volunteer workers, so I'm going to be keeping in touch with everyone. Thank you again to all of you who have kindly supported me and OAB.

Best wishes, Colin.

A taste of sport

By Alex Bagwell

Yesterday I went along to the 'Have a Go Day' run by British Blind Sport, OAB and the VI teams at the Vale of White Horse Leisure Centre in Abingdon, which is where I did VI (Visually Impaired) tennis last year. The event was a chance for blind and partially sighted people in Oxfordshire to try new sports for the first time. The event started with a talk from Alex Pitts, the Participation Officer for British Blind Sport who told us what the timetable was for the day and sorted the different groups out, with my section being the red group. The first activity I took part in was VI tennis, whereby we were taught how to do forehand and backhand moves without the ball touching the ground. I felt that I got better at the activity the longer it went on with most of my attempts going further.

The next sport I tried was VI cricket, which I had some experience of as I had played for two and a half years at Hereford for the RNC (Royal National College for the Blind)

cricket team, the Hereford Bulldogs. When I was bowling I got a wicket with my third ball (bowled) and when I was batting I hit my first ball over the tennis net for six but then had a massive swipe at my third ball and missed completely and got bowled!

Given that I hadn't played in three years, I thought I did well in both batting and bowling, even though I did bowl a wide first ball.

My group was then involved in VI archery. This was an interesting event for me as I hadn't done it before; the difference to normal archery is that the target is closer to you and the arrows are plastic. Also, you can see the scores that you get if you hit a certain number with 10 being the highest and 6 the lowest you could score. Unfortunately, I didn't get a bullseye; hopefully I will do better next time if I play it again in the future.

Finally, the last activity that I attempted was rock climbing. This activity I had done before but not for many years and I had a harness on previously. On this occasion I found that I couldn't make it very far

up the wall and stopped after a couple of climbs.

Overall, I enjoyed the experience of trying out new sports and would definitely do it again. I would advise anybody to go along if they're interested in sport and have a visual impairment. They may be surprised at how much they enjoy the experience!

Alex

Audio books

For many people, audio books are a brilliant way to access stories or written content. We have listed a few of the popular services available for visually impaired people below.

RNIB Audio Library

This service from RNIB is now completely free; they provide 3 formats - audio CD, USB memory stick and digital download. Once you sign up you have access to tens of thousands of titles; to find out more call 0303 123 9999.

Calibre Audio Library

Calibre charge a one-off fee of £35; you can also have a 3 month free trial. They provide audio books in

CD, USB memory stick, online streaming and downloads. To find out more, call 01296 432 339.

Oxfordshire Libraries

Your local library will have a small selection of audio books on CD plus they provide a digital download service similar to RNIB. You can find out more from your local library.

Listening Books

Listening Books provide a wide range of audio books in MP3, CD and online streaming; a membership fee applies. To find out more, call 0207 407 9417.

Online Services

You can now get audiobooks through Amazon's audible service, Apple iTunes and Google Play; just search the internet to find out more.

Local Shops

A range of book shops stock audio books on CD plus charity shops also have a large selection. We even have some at OAB.

To find out more about audio book services, just give us a call.



Back on the bike

David Baxter, 71 and from Abingdon, has been visually impaired for over 30 years due to a detached retina. Three years ago when he joined ActivEyes, he hopped on a bike for the first time since he lost his sight, and David has not looked back! When he joined ActivEyes, he started off going to the Wheels for All cycling events at Horspath running track every other week; now, his cycling has improved so much he does not stop for a break! David also enjoys going to the VI tennis sessions in Abingdon and also the pub meets. He says “This is a great opportunity to meet other visually impaired people... you get to know small tricks and everyone understands what you’re going through, plus going to cycling and tennis helps keep me fit. OAB and ActivEyes have helped me stay as independent as possible.” David has also taken part in sports taster days and even had a go at rock climbing. He’s

a keen gardener and a season ticket holder for Oxford United.

If you’d like to find out more about ActivEyes, give us a call on 01865 725 595.



Picture: David on the climbing wall

Raffle tickets

You may have noticed 2 books of raffle tickets in your newsletter; for £1 a ticket you can be in with a chance of winning £200, £100 Co-op food vouchers, or £50. If you would like more tickets or you receive

this newsletter via email or audio, then please give us a call and we can send them in the post.

AGM

This year's AGM will be held on **Tuesday 11th September at 2pm** at the North Oxford Association. Our guest speaker this year will be Dr Gurjeet Jutley who is a consultant ophthalmologist at the John Radcliffe Hospital, specialising in Glaucoma. As well as the usual formalities of the AGM, we will also be saying goodbye to Colin Cure who has served OAB for over 11 years as our Director. To RSVP for the AGM, please see the back page of the newsletter or contact us.

Help OAB!

There are many ways you can help OAB to raise money and continue to help blind and visually impaired people across Oxfordshire.

You can:

Donate jewellery, coins and stamps to us.

Send us your unused holiday currency.

Get cashback donations on your online shopping at www.easyfundraising.com.

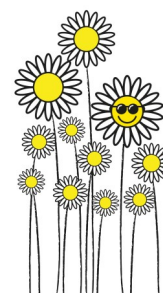
Donate to us at <https://www.justgiving.com/oxaftb>

Organise or participate in a fundraising event in support of us.

For more information, please email fundraising@oxeyes.org.uk or call Nathan on 01865 725595.

Membership

Thank you so much to those who have become a member of OAB or renewed their ongoing membership. This is a huge support to our work and continues to help keep our services free. You can become a member for just £10 a year or even become a lifetime member for £250. If you're not sure if you've renewed or you'd like to become a member for the first time, just give us a call on 01865 725595 or email admin@oxeyes.org.uk



Hello Laura

Hello everyone, my name is Laura and it's wonderful to be able to introduce myself as the Children and Young People's Coordinator at OAB. I only started a few months ago but I have loved it from day one! It's a great team to be part of – very supportive, friendly and fun. The kettle is always on and there always seems to be a reason to eat cake so I'm happy! I am visually impaired myself so it is very encouraging to be in an environment where even I am considered 'normal'!

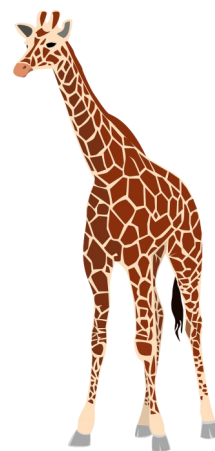
I am really looking forward to meeting more and more of you, especially all the children, young people and their families in the coming months. It was great fun to try and play some sports with you at the Sports Taster day back in June, although I was disappointed with my lack of expertise!

Please get in touch if you need any information or assistance or even if you just fancy a chat – I love meeting people. Also, if you are aged 5 – 11 and would like to join in any of the

following activities, please contact me at OAB or at laurafinnis@oxeyes.org.uk. Thank you!

Upcoming activities:

- Weds 1st Aug: AT THE SEASIDE event at the OAB, 10 – 12:30, games, crafts and fun!
- Thurs 9th Aug: Cotswold Wildlife Park trip with two hands-on experiences. VI children go free, all others £8.
- Fri 31st Aug: Millets Farm – Falconry and Meerkats!



Video magnifiers

Are you in need of a video magnifier? OAB has a range of donated video magnifiers ready to loan out; several ranges are available including those with speech and magnification. Give Nathan a call on 01865 725595 to arrange an appointment.

Oxford Macular Group

This group is in danger of closing at the end of this year unless a new leader can be found. Daphne Dorman is very willing to show someone the ropes and much support is available from the Macular Society. The Group meets only four times a year and the current membership is 35. Someone with a macular condition or with knowledge of this would be ideal. For further information, please contact Daphne on 01993 811084.

VIBNO (Visually Impaired But Not Old)

In July, 30 VIBNO members (and 3 guide dogs) had a ride on a 1960s vintage train through the beautiful Oxfordshire countryside, with the Chinnor and Princes Risborough railway. After the train ride, we had a delicious BBQ organised by one of our members and his family.

Many of our members attend the museum handling sessions in one of Oxford's great museums. The talks are very informative and you always learn something new.

We have a wide range of activities planned for the upcoming months; for details, contact Nicola Pamphilon on 01869 331778.

Welcome Clare

Thank you so much for the warm welcome I have received from everyone to date.

I am delighted to have joined OAB but I certainly have large shoes to fill following the departure of Colin. However, thankfully he has agreed to continue to support OAB in a voluntary capacity. My own background has been spent in the charitable sector for over 22 years working for a mix of small charities such as Winston's Wish and Gloucestershire Deaf Association through to the

OAB is assisted by:



Listening Learning Leading



larger national charities such as RNIB and British Heart Foundation. My roles have been varied over the years from managing service delivery through to income generation.

On a more personal note, my husband Mike and I have one daughter called Harriet who is in her 2nd year at university. We are also registered foster carers, providing a safe home for young people who find themselves in difficulties. Add in a large dog called Hero and 2 horses called Honey and Pancake, and it makes for a lively home!

Over the next few months, I will be travelling throughout the county so I hope to see as many people as possible. If you are visiting the OAB Office on Gordon Woodward Way, please do come and say hello.

Theatre trips

Below are some dates for audio described theatre performances:

Blood Brothers

28 November @ 14.30 Tickets £6.50

Dirty Dancing

7 December @ 17.30 Tickets £9

Jersey Boys

19 December @ 14.30 Tickets £10

Please contact Gwen Cruden on 01865 373378 for more information or to book a place.

Your newsletter

This newsletter is for you and we'd love you to contribute. If you'd like to write an article on a particular experience or offer some advice to other visually impaired people then please get in touch.

If you do not want to receive the newsletter anymore or want to change format to either large print, audio memory stick or email then call or email us and we will update your records.



Local clubs and groups

Abingdon & District Macular Group – 01235 531857.

ActivEyes – 01865 725595.

Banbury Macular Group – 01608 685293.

Banbury Society for the Visually Impaired – 01295 269568.

Chipping Norton Group – 01608 810899.

Didcot / Wallingford Visually Impaired Group – 01235 813391.

Dreaming Spires ten pin bowling – 01869 331778.

Goring Macular Group – 01865 725595.

Henley Visually Impaired Group – 01491 628284.

Kidlington Macular Group – 01865 376482 or 01865 373104.

LOOK Oxfordshire – support for families of visually impaired children, 01189 722322.

Oxford Macular Group – 01993 811084.

‘OXVIC’ – Oxford Visually Impaired Club – 01865 725595.

Retinitis Pigmentosa Group - 01235 511044.

Thame & District Society for the Visually Impaired – 01844 212983.

‘VIBNO’ – Visually Impaired But Not Old! - 01869 331778.

Wantage Blind Social Club - 01235 764646 or 01235 765849.

Friends of Witney Visually Impaired – 01865 725595.

Witney Macular Group – 01993 771828.

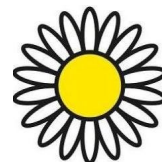
Sensory Impairment Team

The County Council has an excellent team of specially trained staff supporting people of all ages affected by sensory impairment.

Their telephone no. is: **01865 894935.**

Carers Oxfordshire

Is a service for anyone who is caring for another person and would like some support. Their no. is: **0845 0507666**



The Chair and Executive Committee invite you
to the Annual General Meeting of the

Oxfordshire Association for the Blind

At 2.00pm on 11th September 2018

at the

North Oxford Association Community Centre,
Diamond Place, Summertown, Oxford,
OX2 7DP

Nominations for office and resolutions
must be made by a member by 31st August

Guest speaker: Dr Gurjeet Jutley

RSVP

If you wish to attend, please let us know

Telephone: 01865 725595

Email: admin@oxeyes.org.uk

Or write your name on the dotted line

I

wish to attend the A.G.M

And return this page to

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