



Walsall Society for the Blind

**A YEAR
IN
REVIEW**

2017 - 2018

**EDITION
113**

Annual Report

and Summary Financial Statements 2017/2018

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Officers and Members

President Sir J. A. Hawley KCVO, K.St.J,TD,JP,MA

Vice Presidents The Worshipful The Mayor of Walsall Councillor Marco Longhi. The Lord Bishop of Lichfield, The Rt. Reverend Dr. Michael Ipgrave. D. J. Mace, D. I. Pepper FCA, M. L. Griffiths

Chairman J. H. Cooke JP

Vice Chairman D. Smith

Treasurer - Vacant

Chief Executive A. J. Reed

Members *S. Ahmed, *R. Thompson, *J. E. Harris, *K. Merchant, R. Meere, C. J. Hawley, MA,ACMA, *I. Pearson.

WALSALL METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL, Councillors:

T. Jukes, S. Harris (Education)

S. Wood (Adult Social Care)

Board of Directors Chairman, Vice Chairman, Treasurer - Vacant,

R. Meere, *J. Harris, *K. Merchant

A. M. Elliot, *E. Smith

Joint Management Committee Centre for the Blind and Partially Sighted:

J. H. Cooke, D. Smith, Councillors: T. Jukes, P. Washbrook

Auditors Bakers

Bankers HSBC Plc

Investment Advisors EFG Harris Allday

*Visually Impaired Person

Charitable Services

Social Activities Centre	Offering over 150 places per week
Community Officer	Home visits, support, advice and information
Resources and Equipment	Advice and training on a range of products and technology
Talking Newspaper and Magazine Service	News, features, music and Magazines in audio format

Contracted Services

on behalf of Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council

Eye Clinic Liaison Service	Based at Walsall Manor Hospital
Registration Officer	Maintenance of the sight loss register
Transcription Service	Provision of alternate formats

Personnel

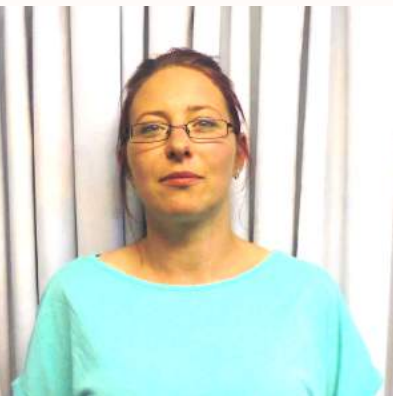
Chief Executive Officer	Amanda Reed
Development Officer	Jayne Jones
Finance Officer	Sue Thompson
Community Officer	Sharon Haycock
Registration & Comm. Eng. Officer	Les White
Operational Support Officer	Claire Evans
Social Activity Centre Group Coordinators	Jackie Wilkinson, Joanne Grinsted David Haycock, Grace Cashen
Talking Services Manager	Keith Corbett
Walsall Talking Newspaper Engineer	Barry Moseley
Domestic Assistant	Brian Grace
Braillist	Ruth Gibbons
Eye Clinic Liaison Officer	Janet Porter

Hello and Welcome



We were pleased to welcome David Haycock in July 2017 and Grace Cashen in August 2017, as they joined team WSB, as the new Social Activity Centre Group Co-Ordinators.

David and Grace join us to develop activities, plan outings and events for the service users and ensure the Social Activity Centre runs smoothly.



Taking part in stimulating and fun activities are essential for well being, as are connecting with people and sharing interests. Some of the activities on offer are; bingo, quizzes, draughts, pool, dominoes, music and crafts.

We wish David and Grace well in their new roles.

Happy Retirement

As we said hello to David and Grace, we said goodbye and good luck to Jackie and Joanne our Social Activity Centre Group Coordinators.



Jackie Wilkinson retired in September 2017, after 13 years with the Society and in March 2018 Joanne Grinsted retired, after 15 years with WSB.



As they both head for new adventures, we wish them the best of everything as we say a huge thank you, for their dedication, commitment and devotion to our service users and to the Society.

They will both be sorely missed.

Chief Executive Officer's Report

This year, the demand on our services has once again increased. We have definitely begun to feel the pressure, as local authority contracts decreased, leaving fewer organisations in Walsall, to deliver necessary specialist support and care services.

The Community Team have been busy making contact with each of our service users on the database and assisting individuals affected by sight loss. Working holistically and in partnership with the rehabilitation team and other specialist organisations, they continue to ensure that our members needs are met, via multi disciplinary approaches.

During the year, we lost our contract to provide the Eye Clinic Liaison Officer (ECLO) post at Walsall Manor Eye Clinic, we did however, retain both the Registration Information and Liaison Service (RILS) and the Centre Management Agreement for this year and for this ongoing support, we thank Walsall Council.

Due to the drop in income and a decrease in donations and legacies, the money held in our reserves has been essential in supporting us, to continue to provide all our services free of charge.

A huge thank you goes to each of our dedicated volunteers, for all their hard work and dedication, as they clocked up a fabulous 3,586 hours of their time to support us. We really could not achieve all we do without you.

Walsall Society for the Blind remains in a strong position, to be able to continue to provide its services to all, for now and the future, due to the generosity of those who make donations and from the legacies of those who remember us in their wills.

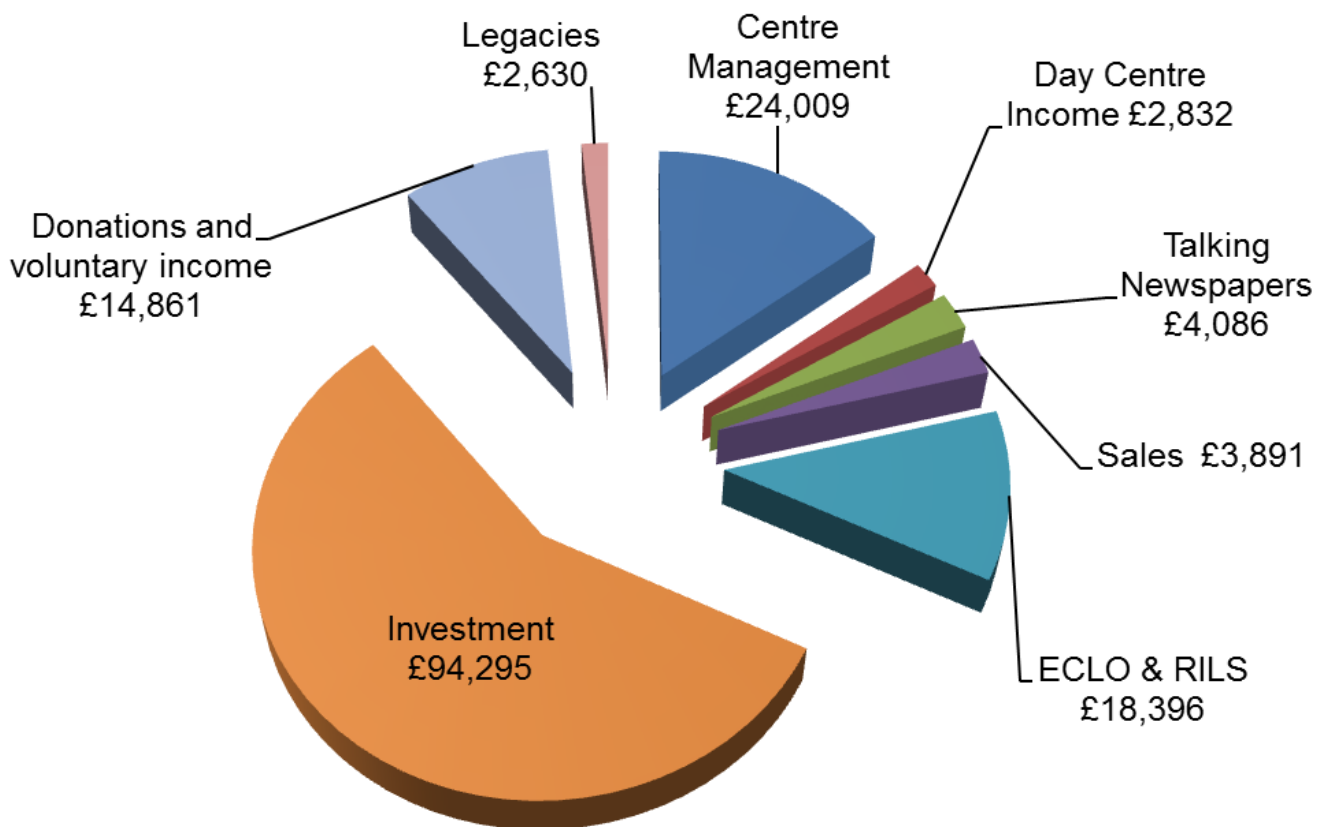
We go forward with a positive attitude, knowing that we are secure for the future and that we can continue our Mission; to provide information support and friendship, to all those affected by sight loss, in the Borough of Walsall.

Treasurer's Report

Income

Our total income for the year was £165,000 compared with £261,507 last year. There was a decrease in donations and legacies of £88,118.

Income by Source – year to 31st March 2018



We wish to thank all who support the Society and the families of those who donate to us, in memory of their loved ones.

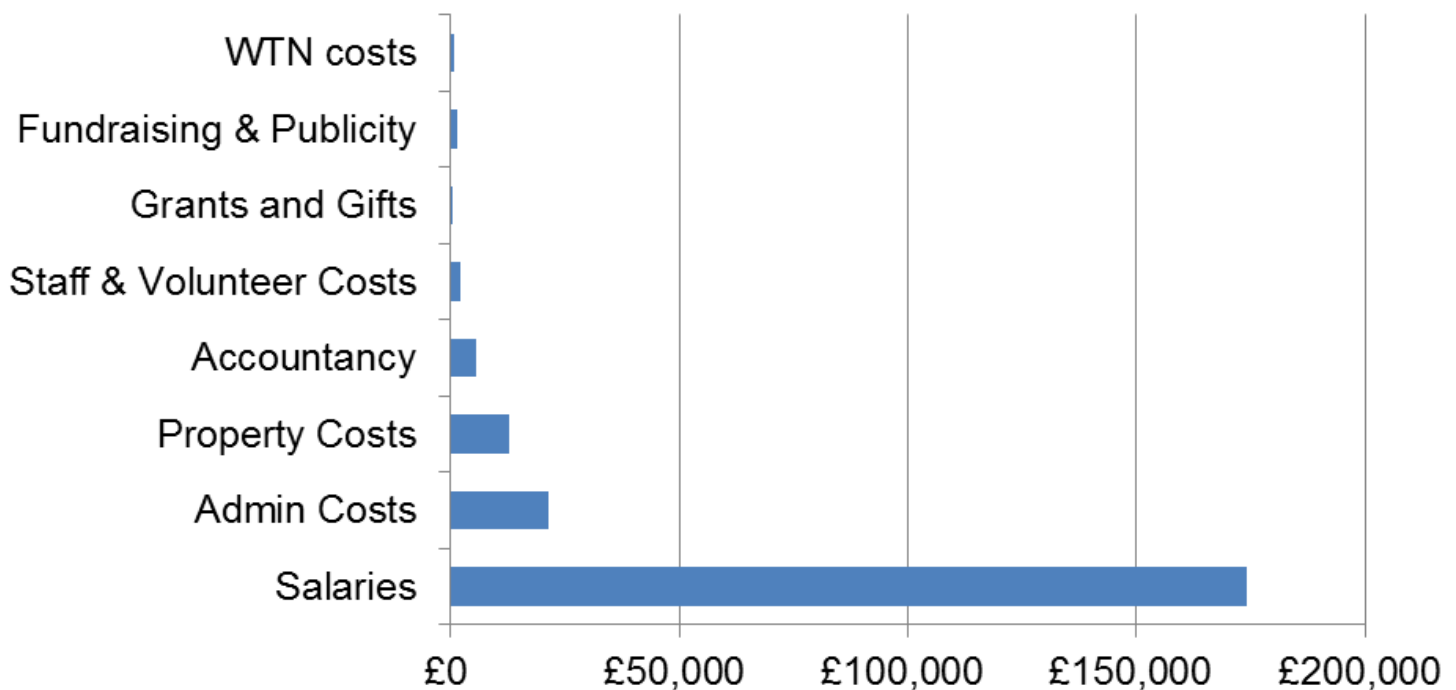
Thank you to Walsall Council for their continued support.

Expenditure

Costs incurred this year were £227,739 compared with £223,815 in the prior year.

Salaries form the largest share of our expenditure which has been reduced again, by £1,206 compared with the prior year.

Expenditure by cost - year to 31st March 2018



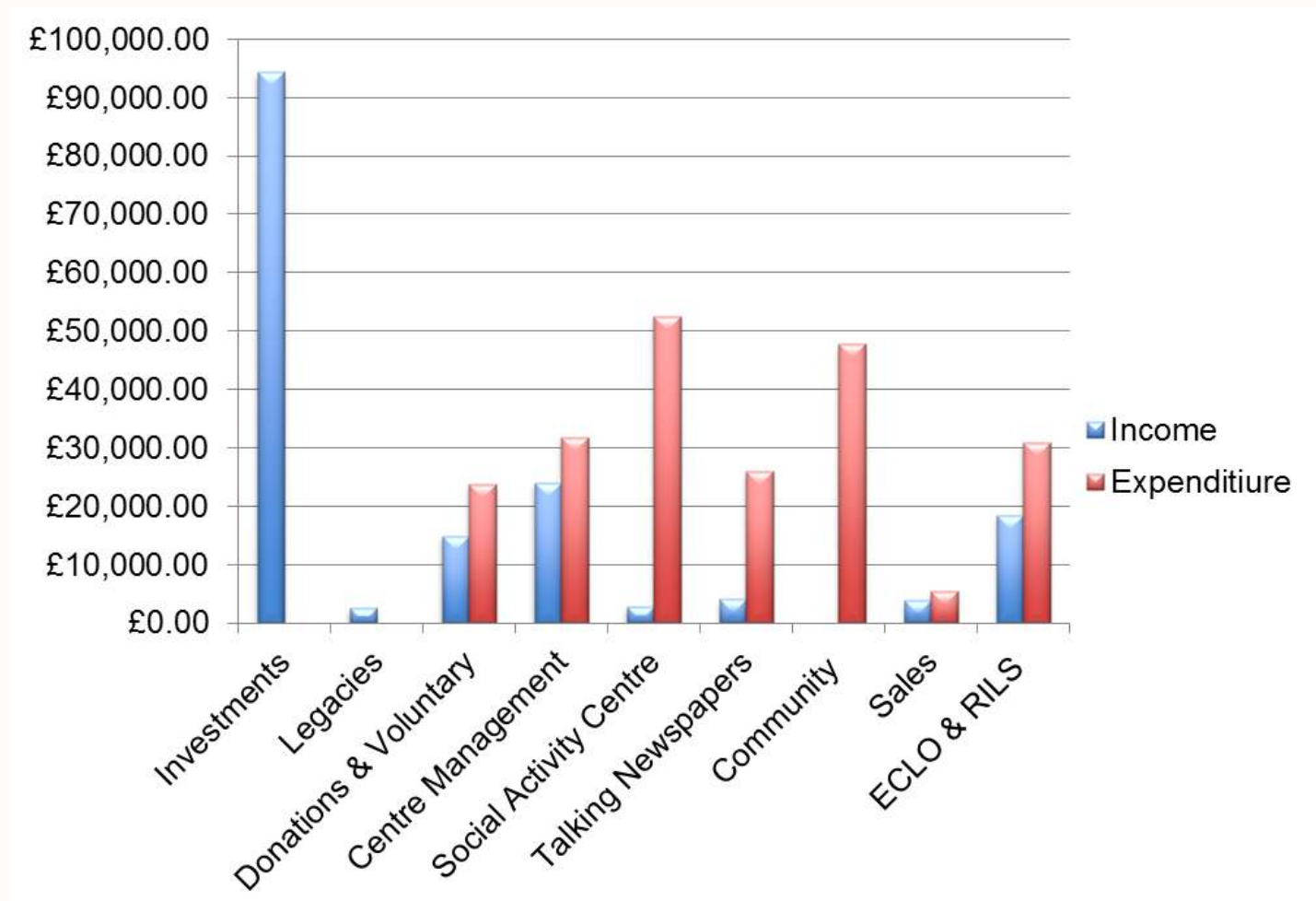
Result for the year

Our expenditure this year was greater than our income, showing a deficit of £62,739. We maintain and continue, the level of support and guidance we offer, to Blind and Partially Sighted individuals, their families and carers, within the Walsall Borough.

Our investment income, legacies and donations are used primarily to fund the Social Activity Centre, Community Support work, Talking Newspaper and Transcription service. Walsall Society for the Blind continues to offer these services, to all those affected by sight loss.

As we have seen, the level of legacies and general donations, have not been sufficient to fully meet the costs of those activities this year.

Income and Expenditure year to 31st March 2018



Society Assets

The investment income we receive each year is generated from our investment portfolio, managed by an independent broker.

This income represents 41% of our annual income and has become an increasing proportion of our total income.

The value of our investments was £2 million at the year end.

Society Reserves

We are required to hold sufficient funds to cover between 9 months and 2 years costs at any time, which we hold in a Development Fund, at £1.2 million.

Closing unrestricted funds for use by the Society stand at £800,148.

Summary

The Trustees believe the Society has sufficient funds to continue to support the visually impaired people of Walsall.

The Trustees also express thanks to the Chief Executive and her dedicated team, who have continued to provide support to those affected by sight loss, within the Borough of Walsall.

A complete set of accounts for the year ended 31 March 2018, is available from the Society in various formats, on request.

Statement of Financial Activities**Year to 31 March 2018**

	<u>2018</u>	<u>2017</u>
	£	£
Incoming Resources		
Voluntary income – donations	23,919	109,205
Grants & contracts	42,895	62,766
Sale of living aids & equipment	3,891	6,708
Investment income	94,295	82,828
Total Incoming Resources	165,000	261,507
Resources Expended		
Charitable activities	195,132	192,818
Cost of generating voluntary income	32,607	30,997
Total Resources Expended	227,739	223,815
Net outgoing/incoming resources	(62,739)	37,692
Realised and unrealised gains/(losses) on investment assets	(101,555)	261,729
Net Movement of Funds	(164,294)	299,421
Fund balance transferred	(0)	(0)
Fund Balances at start of the year	2,164,442	1,865,021
Fund Balances at end of the year	2,000,148	2,164,442

Mission Statement

Founded in 1885, The Mission of Walsall Society for the Blind is to provide information, support and friendship to all visually impaired people in the Borough of Walsall.

The Society serves

1,284 Blind and Partially Sighted people resident in the Walsall Metropolitan Borough, to whom we offer a variety of services and support.

Making a difference



The Society promotes independence and aims to reduce social isolation and enhance the well being of people with sight loss and deteriorating vision, throughout the Borough of Walsall.



We achieve our mission, through our Social Activity Centre. We provide the centre, free of charge, as part of our charitable activities and offer 150 places per week.



We are pleased to say that **2,220** of our Social Activity Centre placements were taken up. This is a fantastic achievement, which makes a real difference to our service users, who visit us each day, each week, throughout the year.



Hobbies and interests are inherently social in nature and we encourage engagement in the variety of activities we offer.

Taking part in games, crafts, quizzes and enjoying entertainment and conversations with friends, all create a sense of well-being.

There are also many planned events and days out, including pub lunches, visits to garden centres, entertainment venues and theatres, shopping trips and canal boat trips.

The Social Activity Centre remains free of charge and is available to anyone registered with sight loss and those awaiting registration or who have deteriorating vision.

We can arrange transportation to and from the centre, if eligible, through the transport provider Ring and Ride. Their current charges are between £1-£2 per journey. Hot meals, snacks and drinks can also be purchased.

We encourage feedback from our service users and volunteers and hold quarterly meetings where representatives for both bodies can discuss the services being offered and bring forward any suggestions and feedback, ensuring everyone has a voice within our daily operations.

Our Social Activity Groups run as follows

Tuesday	10.30 - 3.30
Wednesday	10.30 - 3.30
Thursday	12.30 - 3.30
Friday	10.30 - 3.30

If you or someone you know would benefit from joining the Social Activity Centre, please do get in touch and we will be happy to discuss with you.

Whatever you decide, you can be assured of a warm welcome.



Shopping



Pub lunches



Crafts

In the Community with Sharon and Les



For information, support and assistance with sight loss, contact Sharon - Community Officer and Les - Registration and Community Engagement Officer.

Sharon and Les support individuals, their families and carers through difficult times, actively working to engage with service users and members of the public, to help make sense of the issues which affect their lives.

They help and assist with welfare benefits and concessions that individuals could be entitled to, they assist with housing information and adaptations and put people in touch with local support and other organisations that may be useful to them.

The team offer home visits, hospital visits and visits to residential, supported living, care homes and hospices. They conduct sight loss training and awareness sessions to government bodies and organisations and record all new registrations to the Partially Sighted and Blind Registers, issue registration cards and make contact with each individual on our records, ensuring they are safe and well.

April 2017 - March 2018 saw an increase in the need for the Community Team, dealing with **7,175 cases**, against 4,752 from the previous year, an increase of 2,423. This is indeed an outstanding achievement by our dedicated hardworking team.

Walsall Talking Newspaper and Magazine Service



June 2017 saw Walsall Talking Newspaper (WTN) boldly go where never before, as it became part of the online audio distribution platform and music sharing website Soundcloud.



Soundcloud enables us to upload, promote and share audio on its streaming platform, meaning WTN can now be listened to around the world!!! Our weekly podcasts have been played 1,140 times and we have listeners from the UK, Germany, USA and Netherlands. We also follow various artists and share and stream their music.

It is easy to sign up at www.Soundcloud.com for free and start listening to Walsall Talking Newspaper on a mobile or computer, or you can connect and listen to us on our website, facebook and twitter pages.

Both the weekly Newspaper and monthly Magazines remain free to receive on memory stick and from April 2017 - March 2018 we sent out a grand total of **9,392** publications to our dedicated listeners.

None of these wonderful achievements would be possible without the hard work and support of our many volunteers. From pouching and de-pouching, recording, researching, labelling and scanning, every single person makes WTN what it is today.

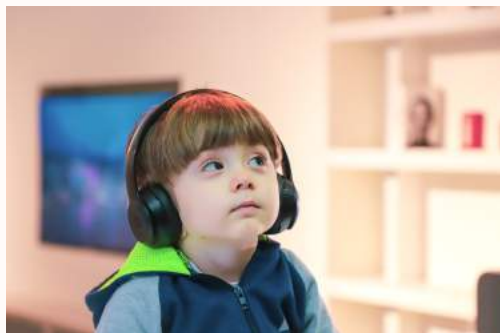
Children and Visual Impairment

There are more than 25,000 blind and partially sighted children aged 16 years and under in the UK. As many as half of these children have other disabilities. The UK National Screening Committee (2013) (Review of Vision Defects Screening in Children) recommends universal vision screening for all children between the ages of 4–5 years, in school and led by Orthoptists (specialists trained in children's vision screening).*

The majority of blind and partially sighted children are educated in inclusive (mainstream) education, but blind and partially sighted children are increasingly being deprived of specialist support and learning materials and exams are not consistently made available in alternative formats.*

*Taken from the document - Statistics and facts on eye health and sight loss RNIB

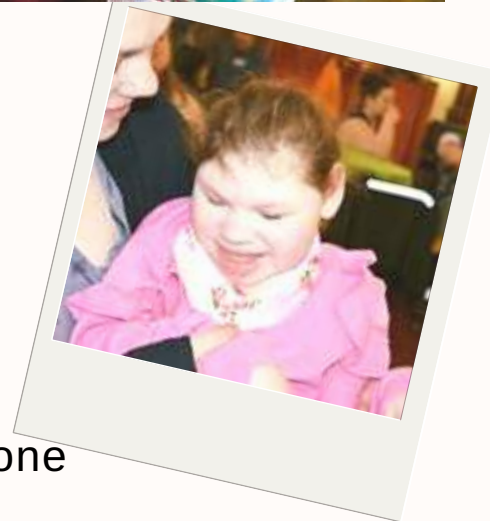
WSB offer support and advice for visually impaired children, young people and their families. We can refer to different organisations and charities, who can provide further information, regarding schools and early years settings, from diagnosis to leaving school. Within Walsall, there is a team of qualified teachers of the visually impaired and also specialist learning support practitioners.



Children's Party

6th January 2018 - St. Pauls Church Walsall

Each year we hold our fun packed children's party and the theme for 2018 was Science. Froggle Parties, gave a fully interactive show, with science demonstrations, party games, plenty of bubbles, a sprinkle of magic and lots of foam!! We always enjoy welcoming the children, their families and friends and would like to thank everyone for coming to the party and joining in with the fun.



My name is Shelley Whale

I was an ordinary person journeying through life as we do, fit, active, 2 jobs, a family, WHEN.....Crash Bang Wallop!!! My life was smashed to pieces.



I was involved in a road traffic accident. The accident was fatal for my beautiful, perfect daughter Natasha at the age of 13 years. I was critical and air lifted to Royal Stoke Hospital clinging to life. Brain injury, multiple body fractures and unconscious.

When my brain began to wake up, my life had totally changed, people who I knew and thought were my friends suddenly turned the other way, the general public just stared or gave me a strange look. I am still a real person with feelings and emotions, this could happen to anyone, so please treat people with brain injury, whatever the cause, with respect and compassion. With help and support you can still have a life, don't give up, lets educate the world on what brain injury survivors can do.

With this statement in mind, I would like to sprinkle a little hope, to increase awareness of brain injury and the effects of sight loss, through my personal journey. My passion and determination to always do my best at everything is still with me and also to always give others a smile and positive feedback.

I have been an insulin dependant diabetic from 16 months old, nearly 49 years. I have an insulin pump to change every 3 days and a continuous glucose monitor to change every 6 days, I cant remember what I did 2 minutes ago, so my house is full of post it notes to remind me about this medication, that keeps me alive.

I have always had the passion to do my best, which inspired me to battle for 7 years to become the mother of my 2 beautiful miracle babies, I was a working mother of 2 children, I was a chef with an OND and HND and now I find it difficult to feed myself.

My spatial awareness, balance and coordination cause me problems, I often bang myself and walk into door frames which is unpleasant. I have 3rd nerve paralysis from the back of my eye to the brain, which controls the movement of the eye and the eyelid, which means I have double vision. I wear an eye patch to block out my double vision and I often get comments or stared at, which makes me say things like "have you found my parrot" or "I've got my eye on you", I wish people would ask me why I wear it, to increase awareness of brain injury and vision problems.

I persevere to do the things I can for myself and have adapted day to day routines to suit myself. I hold bread in the palm of my hand to spread it and cut lettuce with scissors, I often spill food all over the work surfaces and myself and my kitchen often looks like there has been a food fight. I used to smoke, but after the accident I couldn't find the end of the cigarette and used to set my hair on fire, so now I use a vapour one. I used to run, I have lots of half marathon medals and now I can just about make it to get on the Ring and Ride bus.

I'm blessed with my Headway Black Country angels, they have helped me to stimulate and massage my brain and I have my Walsall Society for the Blind angels, who have helped and supported me in every way and developed my skills, lifted my spirits and inspired and encouraged me to realise, that life can still be worth living. Both charities have acceptance of who you are now, don't think about all the things you used to be and do, be proud of any step you make now and celebrate any small achievement.

Never give in, grab every opportunity with both hands and make more people aware of brain injury and sight loss. Show more compassion and care to everyone, this is the message I would like to hear.

Excerpts taken from Shelley's conversation on WTN, thank you Shelley for sharing your journey.



The power of Volunteers

Volunteering can be both challenging and rewarding and people choose to volunteer for a variety of reasons. They offer vital help to people in need, to the local community and to organisations and charities such as ours.



They may not always be aware of it, but volunteers make a huge difference to the lives of people around them. By listening to others, a friend to talk to and an arm of reassurance, nothing is too much trouble.

Our dedicated volunteers serve refreshments and meals, join in with games, provide manicures, they scribe during quizzes, guide and assist service users. The Talking Newspaper Service volunteers research and record newspapers and information, read jokes and letters and write their own pieces for the Whats On Spot and for the poetry section, they also issue and receive returned weekly/monthly publications.

In the past 12 months our volunteers have given the Society and our service users a total of **3,586** hours and if we multiply this by the National Living Wage of £7.50 per hour, that equates to £26,895.00.

It costs the Society in the region of £228,000.00 each year to run its services and without our inspirational volunteers hard work and devotion, the Society would struggle to function and be unable to provide the much needed support to our service users.

We are always extremely grateful and thankful to each individual volunteer.

Tea and Tech

As we enter our third year of Tea and Tech, Andy and myself find the fortnightly sessions held at WSB blossoming and growing in numbers.

W'EYES, a consumer group for blind and visually impaired people also in Walsall and who oversee the funding of Tea and Tech, have once again been successful in receiving funds for 2018/19. This will be very useful, allowing us to purchase more up-to-date devices to include phones, tablets, keyboards and accessories, enabling our group and new members to access portable technology easily and with on going support.

We welcome new members to the group, no matter what great or little knowledge they may have and our aim is to provide advice and demonstrate how to use accessible portable technology such as mobile phones, tablets etc, in a way that someone with sight loss can access them confidently and with ease. The group enjoy discussing what new apps are available as well as tips and tricks and sorting out any issues, adjustments or concerns that the group may have with their own devices.

A longstanding member of Tea & Tech, John, feels that attending our fortnightly sessions has not just improved his knowledge of accessing his phone using certain apps for sight loss, but feels his mobility and general well being is much improved also. Joyce, another member, was able to download a social media app while abroad and tether her phone to local hotspots, enabling her to keep in touch with family back home, this can be a simple task for a sighted person, but quite a challenge for those with sight loss.

Two more members of the group who were not able to use their phones on first attending then moved on to further education, one successful in gaining employment and the other member continuing college education.

We would like to thank WSB for allowing Tea and Tech to take place at the Centre, having a lovely friendly team and providing continued support at all times.

Many thanks ... Dee & Andy

Fundraising

It costs Walsall Society for the Blind in the region of £228,000 a year to run its services.

Donations are vital in enabling us to continue our work, raising awareness and providing help and support to the visually impaired community across the Borough of Walsall.

Throughout Spring and Summer 2017, staff members Claire, Sharon and Les and volunteers Steve and Rich, committed their time and resources, organising and taking part in many fundraisers on behalf of the Society.

The team worked hard sourcing donations for prizes and held tombolas, raffles, name the Teddy Bear and car boot sales at the following events:

Stone Cross St Georges Day Parade and Fete
Saturday 15th April

Dartmouth Park - Sunday 23rd April

Goscote Greenacres May Day Plant Sale
Saturday 6th May

Willenhall Carnival - Saturday 9th June

Pelsall Carnival - Saturday 8th July

Thank you all for your dedication and for raising
£803.98 for WSB.



Thank you to Enoch Evans LLP, who have chosen Walsall Society for the Blind as their charity for 2018.

We are so proud to have been chosen and thank Enoch Evans for their support.



We are always in need of items to use as raffle and tombola prizes, if you have any unwanted items, we will make great use of them and would be grateful if you would consider donating them to WSB, thank you.

WSB NEWS

and developments

Chairman of the Talking News Federation

WSB Chief Executive Officer Amanda Reed, continues her role for a 2nd year, as Chairman of the Talking News Federation. TNF is an umbrella organisation, representing the interests of local Talking Newspapers in the UK, of which Walsall Talking Newspaper is one.



Amanda helps organise and attends national conferences and workshops, representing TNF and Walsall Talking Newspaper and works alongside the TNF Board and members on strategic plans, policies and procedures in a voluntary capacity.

Raise FREE Funds with Give as you Live®

Give as you Live is a free way to raise money for charity when you shop online.

We joined the online fundraising platform, which allows users to shop at over 4,200 top stores and supermarkets, so whether buying gifts, your weekly food shop or even holidays, you can raise free funds for WSB, without it costing you a penny.

The store pays Give as you Live a percentage of your total purchase price in commission and of this, 50% is passed on to charity.

It is a free way to raise money for us and it's free to sign up at www.giveasyoulive.com

WSB NEWS

and developments

Campaign #UKCharityWeek

We were proud to become an official partner charity, with Charity Today News, as they hosted the second annual national charity awareness and fundraising campaign.



The campaign took place 4th – 10th December 2017 and is designed to give people of the UK an opportunity, to place awareness and fundraising for charities high on the national agenda.

In raising the profile and awareness of WSB, we produced videos and audio recordings with our Braillest Ruth and our service users. They spoke about the services we offer and how as a charity, we help and support people with sight loss. We shared this promotional material across social media platforms, our website and via Charity Today.



Safe Places

Working with rights based organisation Changing Our Lives, a Safe Place is somewhere you can go if you have been a victim of a crime, or feel unsafe in any way. It could be a local shop, GP surgery or other community building near you.



The Safe Place will display a sign in their window, which shows a red circle with a white telephone in the centre. WSB is one of the many designated Safe Place points in Walsall.

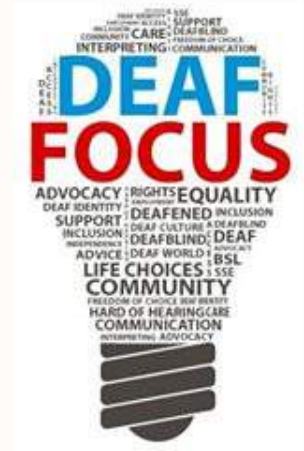
For information about the Safe Places in your area please visit:
www.changingourlives.org

New Service by Deaf Focus

Deaf Focus introduced their new drop-in service to support deaf, deafblind and hard of hearing people in Walsall.

The weekly drop in service can be accessed in full confidence and is free of charge for those with a sensory loss.

The drop-in service held at Walsall Society for the Blind, was chosen for it's central location.



Macular Society Meeting



Held on the 3rd Monday of each month at WSB, the group is run by Volunteer Neal Stockley of the Macular Society.

The meeting brings people together to share their experiences of living with Macular and also has visiting speakers who attend the group to provide advice, support and information.

The Macular Society can be contacted on: **Helpline 0300 3030 111** or for **general enquiries 01264 350 551**.

Public Events and Outreach



National Eye Health Week promotes the importance of having regular sight tests and how to keep your eyes and vision healthy.

The Walsall event took place in the Saddlers Centre 20th - 21st September. Les, Community Engagement Officer for WSB, joined alongside local Opticians and Public Health and engaged with members of the public to inspire them to make healthier lifestyle choices that could benefit their eye health.



Almost 2 million people in the UK are living with sight loss, yet over half of sight loss can be avoided, so it is vital everyone takes care of their eyes.

For further information and advice please visit: visionmatters.org.uk or follow @myvisionmatters





Walsall Society for the Blind
Hawley House
11 Hatherton Road
Walsall. WS1 1XS



Helpline Number
01922 627683



email: hawleyhouse@wsftb.co.uk
Website address www.walsallblind.org



Charity No. 1075854
Company Reg. No. 3674948



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