

“What’s On @” – September and October

Welcome to the September and October Edition of the Wandsworth Vision newsletter. This is a rather strange one as we have several new things to tell you about but can’t attach exact dates and times to many of them. Why, you might well ask.

Well, the simple answer to that question is some good news. We’re glad to announce that, at long last, Karice Baker-Quow has joined the Wandsworth Vision staff team. She will play a key role in the development and delivery of services and activities, both new and old, but only joined us permanently on 20 August. For this reason, we can include ideas that she and the manager are working on but haven’t had time to fix them in the calendar. Please pay close attention to the section called *Things to look out for*, as this draws attention to everything new or changing over the next couple of months.

Established Regular Services

The following are the regular services expected to continue unchanged over the next two months:

- **Knitting and crochet group – weekly**
- **Over50s Social Club - weekly**
- **Talking news - distributed fortnightly**
- **TaiChi - weekly**
- **Technology Assistance by appointment**

Clear print 14pt. Alternative format available if you ask.

- **General drop-in services by appointment**
- **Fish and chip social - monthly**
- **Low Vision Clinic – monthly**
- **Yoga – monthly (dates in the attached calendar)**
- **Works For Me employment Programme – one to one advice from Pocklington by appointment (see calendar for September dates, October dates TBC)**

Important notice – partial closure

On 25 and 26 of September (Tuesday and Wednesday), a course will be taking place which will mean the centre can't be open to all in the usual way. We won't actually be closed, but because this course might mean people are revealing private matters, we don't want them to be interrupted. Staff will be on duty in the office and can therefore be contacted by phone or e-mail, but if you ignore this notice and show up on either of these days, there is a real risk that you might have to turn back around. Anyone who drops in to use the IT suite, for example, should definitely let us know in advance and avoid the lounge area if possible. For information on why this is happening, please read the next article.

Things to look out for

The below are listed all the things which are either returning, new or changing over the next couple of months.

Living with Sight Loss Reminder

we'd like to give a second mention to these courses, the first of which will take place on 25 and 26 September. The centre has hosted these before under a different name, but we're bringing back these two-day courses from the RNIB, thanks to NHS funding received via Wandsworth CCG.

Living with Sight Loss courses are informal, community-based sessions designed to provide people with advice, information and practical solutions to those adjusting to sight loss. As many of you know, Wandsworth Vision (or the Balham Resource Centre) has for some years mainly provided recreational activities, things which might be viewed as pastimes elsewhere. We are now coming under real pressure to offer something to those who just find living with vision impairment difficult, or who might feel a gathering with like-minded people, plus one or two helpful experts, useful for their coping strategies, regardless of what stage they have reached. We are well aware that most What's On@ readers might not actually need this course, but you would naturally be very welcome. We are always trying to reach new people and give them help when they need it the most. This makes courses of this kind vitally important. Some people simply aren't yet ready for TaiChi, dance or socials. Instead they need some basic facts just to reach a stage where they might consider trying such things out.

Some topics covered include:

- Welfare rights
- Getting out and about
- Tips and gadgets for everyday living

- Assistive technology – including tablets and phones
- Eye health
- Leisure, hobbies and interests.
- Other helpful organization's and services.

People are welcome to bring family members or trusted friends/professionals if they wish.

If you are interested, feel free to contact us by calling 020 8675 4246, or by e-mailing:

Brc@pocklington-trust.org.uk.

A second course will hopefully take place in February 2019.

(Please note that much of the above is taken directly from the RNIB website.)

Art Class

We're pleased to say that we will now be able to continue these classes throughout the Autumn semester. Regulars will know that this was up in the air for a short while. We had decided to end our partnership with South Thames College and go it alone. This led to a tricky phase where we had to make sure we had sufficient funds to see us through until Christmas. As it is, we've not only got the budget to carry on, but will keep our tutor Sally Booth, who has been vital to making this class one of our most popular activities.

While this is all good news, self-funding the art class will make it less stable than before. We will from now on need to seek funds to keep it going. Fundraising efforts will begin in earnest to protect this class from 2019

onwards, but we will be able to do a run of ten sessions between now and Christmas. That's fewer than usual, so we apologise for this and ask for your patience.

The next few months will be used for planning. Many of you will know that this class has been difficult to join for some time. People must first join a waiting list if they are interested and then wait for a place to become vacant. We don't yet know how it will change, but now that we're no longer working with the college, we will look into making our art accessible to as many people as possible.

The class begins again on Monday 24 September, if we can figure out a way to open it up to more people in 2019, this newsletter will be the place to read about it.

We must continue charging a fee, but for those registering for the remainder of this year, the charge will be just £20 each, simply because there are fewer classes.

Dance

We will restart this with our tutor Barbara on Friday 28 September. As ever, we advise that you tell us if you're interested in dance, so that we can ensure you get the information you will need.

People have given us feedback that they would like to try a few new dance styles. As a result, manager Andy and Karice will work with Barbara to give participants as much variety as possible.

Healthy and Safe Cookery

For newcomers to this newsletter, you should know that we run our cookery sessions on fortnightly Fridays, alternating with the above dance classes. This is because the tutor Barbara teaches both.

Classes will begin again on Friday 21 September. As with dance, we will try to do some more planning to freshen up ideas. Now that Karice has joined us at the centre, we have more people around to help with this kind of planning.

IT Tuition

Some of you will remember a plan to recruit a part-time IT tutor which has been described in past newsletters. Well, we're pleased to say that we were given the green light to recruit at the end of August and we expect the advert to go external in September. This does mean that we are unlikely to appoint someone until November, but they will be in post for a year and, if uptake is large enough, we hope to find further funding to extend the service.

Many of you have been chasing this up, and we've had the funds for quite some time thanks to the Greater London Fund for the Blind. It gives us real pleasure, therefore, to break this news. We only ask for a little more patience, as some weeks will be needed for the recruitment process to run its course and for the successful candidate to work any notice period he or she might have.

As ever, if you are interested in taking up this free tuition. Please call 020 8675 4246 or E-mail:
brc@pocklington-trust.org.uk.

Book Groups

Yet again, this is a note about activities restarting, but we can't say exactly when. Some of you will know that we used to run a small monthly book group at Putney Library. This had a group of regulars who liked it to be done a certain way, so we are aiming both to restart this group, but also to trial another at Balham.

The Balham one would involve registering with the Calibre book group support service, so we again will need ideas of numbers. To register, please contact us at the centre or by e-mailing:

brc@pocklington-trust.org.uk

We will pay the subscription for Wandsworth Vision, but each group receives a set number of books per year. This means we will need quite a stable group, but I'm sure we could do some swapping around if people find they don't like it.

The Putney group was quite chatty and light-hearted. We want to make the Balham one slightly different. Not intense exactly but more focussed on discussions of the books provided. To get the right formats, and indeed to start this group at all, we really do need to know if people would be interested. So, let us know by the usual means. This will be free for the time being.

Demo of RNIB in your Pocket

I'm pleased to say that someone from Pocklington's technology team has agreed to do a demonstration of this device, RNIB In Your Pocket, at some point in the first two weeks of October. If you are interested, please let us know because spaces will be limited. More importantly, do read on to learn more about it first.

What is it?

Starting simply, it's like a smartphone but easier to use. By this we mean that it has been simplified to make it less confusing. They have achieved this by making sure you can use all its functions by talking to it and, if you should ever get stuck, it talks back and takes you through options which should mean you always get what you want without too much fuss. This isn't half of what it offers though.

Starting with basics, it already comes with a competitive phone contract, as you would have for a mobile phone, meaning you are saved the bother of setting this up. For £22 per month, you could sign up to a two-year tariff with unlimited calls, texts and 3G of data. If this doesn't make sense to you, keep reading.

by signing up to this contract, you would get access to RNIB talking books, podcasts, newspapers and magazines which are all bang up to date. You would be able to read/listen to these while out and about because of the data allowance. If at home, you could use its good quality speaker if you prefer that to headphones.

As if that's not enough, it can listen to you and perform functions that you ask of it. To use examples from the RNIB, you could ask it to play you the Archers or tell you the weather in any part of the country, and it will not only hear you, but act on your request almost instantly.

If that hasn't got you interested, imagine being able to access any of RNIB's 25,000 talking books with a couple of carefully chosen words. Alternatively, you can use voice commands to call friends or add them to your contacts list. You can even ask it where you are, and it will give you useful information to get your bearings, or indeed tell you exactly where you are.

What's more, the things it can play you or tell you is increasing all the time as it's information sources are constantly being updated.

It has a touchscreen if you've already become comfortable working this way, but the critical thing is that you don't have to. You can also hook it to your home internet connection, so you don't use all your data, and just like modern phones, it has a camera built in.

In short, it is a smartphone, but designed for visually impaired people, so far easier to use.

If this has tickled your fancy, register for this demo session at the Balham Resource Centre in the first half of October and we will ensure you are first to know the specific date as soon as we have it. We even have a working device of our own, for people to look at in advance and practice on afterwards, but it is well worth attending a session with a specialist who really knows their stuff.

Once again, call us on 020 8675 4246 or E-mail:

brc@pocklington-trust.org.uk.

Alternatively, if you aren't interested in a demo but do want the product, you can call the In Your Pocket team on **0333 772 7708**.

Pub socials

We hope to restart these again in early October. If people would be interested, please let us know as timing and location might determine when and where we go.

Volunteer with Wandsworth Vision

We are always looking for enthusiastic volunteers to support or run activities at the Balham Resource Centre and in the community. Indeed, at present we possibly have greater need than ever. If you, or someone you know, have a skill or talent you are willing to share by volunteering, then please get in touch. Either e-mail volunteering@pocklington-trust.org.uk

Or call Arif Adam on 07773 582 708.

Pocklington Notices

The Link Up Service

Link Up' is another Pocklington service for people with sight loss living right across London. It aims to match people (aged 18+) with volunteers so they can attend events and participate in activities together. The focus of Link Up is on social activities and events, such as going to an art gallery, theatre or joining in with a sport event. It does not include trips which are a necessity such as visiting the doctor or going out shopping. Link Up

specific events also occur regularly and are listed in a regular newsletter that you can receive if you register with the service. All necessary contact details below.

For more information, please contact Arif Adam on 07773 582708, or email Arif.Adam@pocklington-trust.org.uk

External Events and Activities

London Vision Working Age Forum

As the name suggests, these events draw visually impaired people of working age together to meet, swap ideas, network and hear talks from people whose experience could be of significance to anyone seeking work or simply developing their career.

See details of the next Working Age Forum below. This one's a bit different.

Employer Insight & Networking Event

28th September 2018

Arrival 10:00 for a 10.15 prompt start. Finish 4.00

Location: Lockton, The St Botolph Building, 138 Houndsditch London, EC3A 7AG

Thomas Pocklington Trust & Lockton are once again collaborating to host an event for blind and partially sighted people looking to improve their employment prospects.

The event will include:

Insightful keynote speakers

Professional CV guidance

Mock interviews with Lockton staff

Professional development workshops

This presents a great opportunity to meet new people in similar situations & receive professional development advice.

Lockton is the largest global independently owned insurance broker and their staff will be available to provide all kinds of employment tips.

To express an interest in attending please send your CV to Martin Sigsworth, Senior Employment Manager by 5th September.

martin.sigsworth@pocklington-trust.org.uk

Please also advise if you have any dietary or access requirements, including being met at Aldgate tube station.

Merton Vision Technology Exhibition

The When: Tuesday 10th September (time TBC).

this event was mentioned in the previous newsletter, but as such things are always very popular, it seemed wise to repeat information about the second of these events taking place very soon.

, exhibiting companies will be Enhanced Vision, Calibre talking books, Blind Veterans and Dolphin Systems.

Many people feel it is sufficient to check such things out online, but the truth behind what their stuff does can often only be grasped by seeing it in the flesh.

If you are interested in attending, simply call Merton Vision on 020 8540 5446.

Please note that Wandsworth Vision cannot help with transport arrangements for this event.

App feature – Microsoft Soundscape

This is a summary of one of the most recent navigation smartphone apps. It's been included in this newsletter because, unlike many other apps which come and go, it's continued to get positive reviews from people in various countries and from all walks of life. One brief note to readers though, if you know a lot about apps, this description is probably not for you as we will simplify things a little.

So, what is it?

This is software from Microsoft which you can download onto your phone and it will help you get around. The difference with this one is that it will use sound signals to guide you. As a result, you can use the app while using your own techniques for getting around (such as hearing or low vision).

Instead of just putting directions and distances into words as most other apps of this kind do, it will also give you a sound signal as a guide. What's more, it's 3D, so if your destination is the third floor of a building to your right, you will hear a sound through your headphones which is not only to your right but also above you. As always, you must then use common sense and other skills to guarantee that you have reached your intended destination, but this is a different navigation system which might suit some people more.

The obvious downside is that some visually impaired people will have to use headphones while listening to get around - no mean feat. However, most small headphones don't cut out your ability to hear entirely and you needn't keep them in all the time. Bone conducting headphones might help some people with this as they don't plug right into your ears.

One of the app's most interesting features is that you can set a sound beacon once you have told it your destination. As you walk, it will also give you information about streets your passing or crossing, meaning you

can actually build up a sense of local geography as you go. Something a lot of sight impaired people find difficult, even if they have lived or worked somewhere for a long time.

This is probably not suitable for complete smartphone beginners, but it is an interesting idea and handy to use alongside other navigation tools you might already employ.

Andy the centre Manager gives his word that some people will find this app useful, especially where users are already confident with independent travel and smartphone usage.

The above is not a full or perfect description, but enough to give those interested in such things reason to investigate it more closely. It is, however, unlikely ever to be your sole means for getting around quickly or safely.

Calendar of Social Events & Activities

The below table includes only the activities run at the Balham Resource Centre (BRC) or which have been organised to take place elsewhere by Wandsworth Vision.

Activity/Event	Venue	Date	Time Start	Time End	Cost £	Frequency	Notes
Over-50s Social	BRC	Thursday 6 September	2PM	4PM	£5 for transport, 50P for refreshments	Weekly	Transport for Wandsworth residents only
TaiChi	BRC	Thursday 6 September	3PM	5PM	Free	Weekly	Two consecutive one-hour sessions
Knitting Club	BRC	Monday 10 September	10:30	12:30	Free	Weekly	Register in advance
Works For Me Employment Programme	BRC	Tuesday 11 th September	10AM	4PM	Free	Twice monthly	Book slot in advance

Yoga	BRC	Thursday 13 September	10:30	11:30	Free	Once a month but dates can vary	Wear comfortable clothes for light exercise
Over-50s Social	BRC	Thursday 13 September	2pM	4PM	£5 for transport, 50P for refreshments	Weekly	Transport for Wandsworth residents only
TaiChi	BRC	Thursday 13 September	3PM	5PM	Free	Weekly	2 consecutive 1-hour sessions
knitting Club	BRC	Monday 17 September	10:30	12:30	Free	Weekly	Register in advance
Over-50s Social	BRC	Thursday 20 September	2PM	4PM	£5 for transport, 50P for refreshments	Weekly	Transport for Wandsworth residents only
TaiChi	BRC	Thursday 20 September	3PM	5PM	Free	enrolment only	Two consecutive one-hour sessions
Works For Me Employment Programme	BRC	Thursday 20 th September	10AM	4PM	Free	Twice monthly	Book slot in advance

Healthy and Safe Cookery	BRC	Friday 21 st September	11AM	1PM	£5	Fortnightly	Register in advance
Knitting Group	BRC	Monday 24 September	10:30	12:30	Free	Weekly	Register in advance
Art Class	BRC	Monday 24 September	2PM	4PM	£20 per person for Autumn semester	Weekly until December	By enrolment only
Living With Sight Loss Course (Day 1)	BRC	Tuesday 25 September	11AM (TBC)	4PM (TBC)	Free	One-off event	Registration in advance essential. Those not attending should try to avoid the centre if possible.
Living With Sight Loss (Day 2)	BRC	Wednesday 26 September	As above	As above	Free	One-off event	As above
Low Vision Clinic	BRC	Thursday 27 September	11AM	3PM	Free	Monthly	Register in advance for 30-minute slots
Over-50s Social	BRC	Thursday 27 September	2PM	4PM	£5 for transport, 50P for refreshment	Weekly	Transport for Wandsworth residents only

Fish and Chip Lunch	BRC	Thursday 27 September	2PM onwards		£5	Monthly	Register in advance
TaiChi	BRC	Thursday 27 September	3PM	5PM	Free	Weekly	Two consecutive one-hour sessions
Dance	BRC	Friday 28 th September	11AM	1PM	Free	Fortnightly	Register in advance
Knitting Group	BRC	Monday 1 October	10:30	12:30	Free	Weekly	Register in advance
Art Class	BRC	Monday 1 October	2PM	4PM	£20 each per semester	Weekly	By enrolment only
Yoga	BRC	Thursday 4 October	10:30	11:30	Free	Once a month but dates can vary	Wear Comfortable clothes for light exercise
Over-50s Social	BRC	Thursday 4 October	2PM	4PM	£5 for transport, 50P for refreshment	Weekly	Transport for Wandsworth residents only

TaiChi	BRC	Thursday 4 October	3PM	5PM	Free	Weekly	2 consecutive 1-hour sessions
Healthy and Safe Cookery	BRC	Friday 5 th October	11AM	1PM	£5	Fortnightly	Register in advance
Knitting Club	BRC	Monday 8 October	10:30	12:30	Free	Weekly	Register in advance
Art Class	BRC	Monday 8 October	2PM	4PM	£20 per person for this semester	Weekly	By enrolment only
Over-50s Social	BRC	Thursday 11 October	2PM	4PM	£5 for transport, 50P for refreshments	Weekly	Transport for Residents only
TaiChi	BRC	Thursday 11 October	3PM	5PM	Free	Weekly	Two separate consecutive one-hour classes
Dance	BRC	Friday 12 th October	11AM	1PM	Free	Fortnightly	Register in advance

Knitting Club	BRC	Monday 15 October	10:30	12:30	Free	Weekly	Register in advance
Over-50s social	BRC	Thursday 18 October	2PM	4PM	£5 for transport, 50P for refreshments	Weekly	Transport for Wandsworth residents only
TaiChi	BRC	Thursday 18 October	3PM	5PM	Free	Weekly	Two consecutive one-hour sessions
Healthy and Safe Cookery		Friday 19 th October	11AM	2PM	£5	Fortnightly	Register in advance
Knitting club	BRC	Monday 22 October	10:30	12:30	Free	Weekly	Register in advance
Art Class	BRC	Monday 22 October	2PM	4PM	£20 per person for this semester	Weekly	By enrolment only
Over-50s Social	BRC	Thursday 25 October	2PM	4PM	£5 for transport, 50P for refreshments	Weekly	Transport for Wandsworth residents only

TaiChi	BRC	Thursday 25 October	3PM	5PM	Free	Weekly	Two consecutive one-hour sessions
Fish and Chip Social	BRC	Thursday 25 October	2PM onwards		£5	Monthly	Register in advance
Dance	BRC	Friday 26 th October	11AM	1PM	Free	Fortnightl y	Register in advance
Knitting Group	BRC	Monday 29 October	10:30	12:30	Free	Weekly	Register in advance
Art Class	BRC	Monday 29 October	2PM	4PM	£20 per person for this semester	Weekly	By enrolment only