

## **“What’s On @” – March/April**

**Welcome to the March/April edition of the Wandsworth Vision Newsletter. In addition to our regular activities you will also find some important information regarding changes to Wandsworth Vision.**

### **Manager’s Introduction**

Before the newsletter gets started properly, there are a couple of things I’d like to draw attention to.

The first is something that many will know has been developing for some time. I’m pleased to announce that we have at long last appointed a new technology tutor, working three days a week, who is primed and ready to help you with your phone and computer needs.

Matthew Tiller will join during March and is expected to remain at Balham for twelve months, thanks to funding from the Greater London for the Blind (GLFB). Matthew is a qualified teacher in subjects besides technology, meaning he can adapt his style and teaching speed to suit the person. Thankfully, he also knows a lot about assistive technology and, what he doesn’t know, he is ready and able to research.

What we are trying to give people is a kind of intense but pressure-free way of learning about technology. By this we mean sequences of sessions, tailored to you, delivered one to one and at your own pace. Each course of training could run for up to six sessions, giving you the chance to repeat material if you need to.

In the past, training of this kind was rare, brief and expensive. If you came across free training from a charity, for instance, it would be down to sheer luck and people would often only get a couple of contact hours maximum. This often meant people felt under pressure to practice things in their own time which they had only half learned. This was often a recipe for losing confidence and forgetting everything entirely after a short period of time. We want to tackle this differently.

By offering batches of lessons, we expect people to come weekly to hammer home what they really need to learn. This does mean you might need to keep things simple but, if you're lucky, you might get another batch of lessons towards the end of Matthew's time here if everyone involved agrees it would be helpful. Alternatively, we might sign you up for group sessions, if it seems these could be useful.

No system is perfect, but we really hope the many people who have told us they'd like training will come forward now and take full advantage. tech volunteers might even want to book in for a chat, or to watch Matthew teach, so you might learn some tricks of the trade.

One thing is for sure, if you haven't already, please register for sessions as soon as possible. If you don't, you might have to wait several months, as he obviously can't teach everyone from the start. To those who book a little late, please don't worry as we will do everything we can to make sure you get a chance.

I must just ask you to remember one or two things before Matthew's work gets underway:

- Matthew is good but no miracle worker. You won't become a programmer for Microsoft overnight if you join as a complete beginner. Please try to be realistic but do also ask about information sources or ways to teach yourself. For example, many gadgets or specialist software packages have good manuals included now.
- Be prepared for your first session to be a discussion. Matthew needs to get a sense of what you know and how you learn. This is not a waste of time. It's very sensible and will make the following contact time count. Matthew will plan based on what you tell him and what he thinks is appropriate.
- Bring any equipment you own with you. Matthew needs to know if it works. If he can't teach you on your own equipment, he will either need to show you what we have at the centre, or you will have to replace what you have. We sadly have no funding to buy people new equipment of their own.
- Screenreader users should note that we only have NVDA on the centre machines. This is because it's free while the best equivalents are very expensive. Those of you who know your stuff might ask why we've done this. The simple answer is that someone with no equipment and little money gains nothing by learning how to use things they can't afford. At least this way the person being taught can use the centre machines when their tuition finishes.

The only remaining point to make on this is that people using the IT Suite must be considerate if someone is being taught in there. They should avoid chatting among themselves and should under no circumstances

interfere with a lesson. Even if you think you know something that would help, you must keep it to yourself. As we've said, Matthew will be working to plans and you won't know what they are.

I thank you for reading this notice carefully and hope you will register soon. Technology is the one thing people have consistently said they want help with since I joined in 2016, so please don't let this opportunity pass you by.

### **London Vision**

My second item is both difficult and simple. I'll start at the tricky end and then things can only get better.

Pocklington will soon launch a new charity called London Vision. We have to mention this because you are bound to hear the name soon. The Balham Resource Centre, which sometimes uses the name Wandsworth Vision, will be part of this larger London Vision.

### **What is it?**

Put very simply, it's an umbrella charity covering all of what used to be Pocklington's services in the capital. This means household names like ELVis and SELVis, charities in their own right, will soon cease to exist and their staff and services will also be absorbed by the new London Vision.

### **What does this mean for Balham?**

This is the simple news I promised. The basic answer is nothing. Nobody knows what might happen in the distant future, but for now we at Balham will continue just the same. The centre and its activities will go on

unchanged with the same staff. Of course, what we offer might gradually change over time, but that's always been the case.

### **What will I notice?**

You may notice soon that staff and the BRC email addresses change. It won't all happen straight away, but staff do now use email addresses containing London Vision instead of Pocklington. This has to happen because legally the two charities, Pocklington and London Vision, will be separate.

The idea is that all this happens with minimum disruption for all of you. So please just ask if you find anything confusing.

Well, that's more than enough from me. Let's now move on to the less formal news of what's to come and what's been happening. Please read carefully though as there are important notices, particularly concerning centre closures, that we don't want you to miss.

## **Notices**

## **Centre Closures**

The centre will be closed on **Friday 19<sup>th</sup> April** for the Easter break and will reopen on **Monday 29<sup>th</sup> April**

## **Registering for Classes**

Please remember, if you are attending any of our classes – even if you've been attending the same class for years – we need you to confirm your attendance by phone or email at least a day before the classes please. We need to know who will be attending in advance for a few reasons; 1. So the tutors know how many people to expect for their classes and can adapt the sessions accordingly; 2. So classes are not oversubscribed; 3. So we have an accurate attendance record; 4. So that we can cancel a class and save the tutors a wasted journey to the centre should numbers be too low.

## **One-one support at BRC**

If you require staff support with a query or need to use the photocopier please call the office in advance so we can arrange a time for you to come in that is both convenient for you and BRC staff. As you are aware, staff have a number of tasks in addition to centre activities so we cannot guarantee that we can make time for lengthy one-to-one queries without prior notice. Also, as the photocopier is based in the office, it may not be convenient for you to use it if there is a meeting taking place. You may be asked to leave if you arrive without advanced notice.

## **Save the Trees!**

While we're happy for people to use the printing and photocopying facilities we will be monitoring paper usage to reduce wastage and abuse of our resources. As you are aware, we are a charity and so we have a responsibility to ensure that our resources are managed carefully. While we don't object to people printing and photocopying the occasional document, excessive printing and photocopying will not be tolerated. Printing or photocopying will be capped at 30 pages. Anything more than this will require a payment of 5p per sheet. Alternatively, you can bring in your own ream of paper if you know you have a lot of printing and/photocopying to do but in doing so, please be aware of ink and toner usage. We reserve the right to stop any printing/photocopying which we feel exceeds a reasonable amount of ink or toner.

### **Closing Time**

Please remember that the closure time for visitors to the centre is **5pm** unless arrangements have been made with staff beforehand. We advise that you begin getting ready (eg; using the facilities; closing down computers etc) at around 4:50pm.

### **Special Farewell**

We would like to give some time to saying a fitting goodbye to a household name at Balham.

Diana Plant, long-serving volunteer with the over-50s social for at least twelve years, is sadly taking her leave as she will be moving out of the area at the end of March.

On Thursday afternoons, Diana has been about our most reliable volunteer since she joined, following her own father's attendance at the social. She regularly runs raffles and quizzes, keeps conversation flowing and unflinchingly includes everyone with the same kind of relaxed friendliness.

She always says how much she enjoys it but working the way she does is a real gift. Depending on who shows up, this group can really vary from week to week, but she has never been daunted by this and shows up rain or shine.

Perhaps more importantly, her stability helps to settle the other volunteers who have come and gone down the years. Her presence also often means staff can leave the group to look after itself because she's trusted to do such a good job. It's always been a relief to know she will be there.

Diana will be sorely missed and, although we will have to search for someone to replace her, we know volunteers like her don't grow on trees. Frankly, you either have a knack for this or you don't. Some people show up to help, and they are appreciated, but Diana undoubtedly makes people want to come, which is quite another level.



Diana clearly deserves to take her leave at a time of her own choosing, but we had to take this chance to thank her sincerely for all she's done and wish her the best. We will miss her common sense, energy and genuine enjoyment of what she did for us.

### **Established Regular Services**

- **Knitting group – weekly**
- **Over50s Social Club - weekly**
- **Talking news - distributed fortnightly**
- **TaiChi - weekly**
- **Technology Assistance by appointment**
- **General drop-in services by appointment**
- **Fish and chip social – monthly**
- **Low Vision Clinic – monthly**
- **Yoga – monthly (dates in the attached calendar)**

### **Your input**

There are a number of events and services that cannot take place unless we have interest from you as members. In one to one conversations some people have mentioned events and/or activities that they would like to see at the centre but upon asking for input from others via the newsletter the response is often very poor.

Below are some activities and events that have been suggested but cannot go ahead unless you communicate to us that you are interested. If you would like the these or other events and/or activities to take place, please let us know by calling **020 8675 4246** or emailing [brc@pocklington-trust.org.uk](mailto:brc@pocklington-trust.org.uk)

### **Southwest London Working Age Forum**

If you are interested in networking with VI professionals to gain information about finding work, you may be interested in the Working Age Forum (WAF). Up until now, WAF meetings have taken place in central London on a bi-monthly basis. and include guest speakers and networking opportunities. The organisers are willing to host some future meetings in South West London if there is enough interest so if you, or someone you know would like this to go ahead please register your interest by giving us a call or dropping us an email. We might host the first one and, if they really take off, the centre would definitely host them from time to time.

### **Games & Quizzes**

Some of you have requested the reintroduction of games and quizzes at the centre. We are happy to dedicate a few hours a week to this with a selection of games such as cards; dominos; board games and quizzes taking place simultaneously giving you a selection of activities to participate in. However, we need to know that enough people will attend regularly so if this is something you would like to see at the centre, again, please phone or email us to let us know.

## **French and/or Braille Sessions**

In March we will be welcoming Wayne Chapman to the service. He will be volunteering at BRC and during this time is happy to deliver French classes and Braille classes to anyone who may want to take part which can be amended to include all levels from beginner to advanced. If you would like to participate please contact us so we can add your name to the list.

## **The following is taken from the London Visual Impairment Forum (LVIF) newsletter**

### **Freedom Pass Renewal**

Users of the Older Persons Freedom Pass whose pass expires on 31 March 2019 should have received a letter in early February explaining how to renew the pass.

Freedom Passes must be renewed every five years. Therefore, residents whose pass expires on 31 March 2019 will need a new pass in order to keep using the scheme.

More information is available [here](#):

([www.londoncouncils.gov.uk/services/freedom-pass/older-persons-freedom-pass/renewing-your-pass](http://www.londoncouncils.gov.uk/services/freedom-pass/older-persons-freedom-pass/renewing-your-pass))

## **New App for Taxicard**

CityFleet now have an app for Taxicard called CityFleet Taxicard which is available on Android through the Google Play Store and iPhone through the App Store.

The app has been designed to give Taxicard members access to make and manage their bookings using their smart phone and the app includes a number of features including:

- The number of trips you have left to use
- The ability to save favourite addresses and journeys to save time when booking
- Information on the cost and distance of journeys
- Driver and vehicle details once your booking has been allocated
- A 'track vehicle' feature so you know when the vehicle will arrive
- A 'share my location' option to share with family and friends
- Touch log in for security
- A 'Rate this booking' feature

CityFleet is continuously seeking to improve the Taxicard app and would welcome members' feedback on the current app as well as members who would like to test any changes that are made to the app. Any members wanting to provide feedback on the current app can do so by contacting [Taxicardquery@cityfleet.co.uk](mailto:Taxicardquery@cityfleet.co.uk) with any feedback that you have.

To become a tester for future versions of the app you will have to have an android phone, please contact [Taxicardquery@cityfleet.co.uk](mailto:Taxicardquery@cityfleet.co.uk) with your details if you would like to register your interest for future app testing.

## **BRC Events to look out for**

### **Sight & Sound Event**

We will be working with Sight and Sound to host a small exhibition of the latest technology for people with sight loss. The event will take place at BRC in May. If you'd like to see what the latest advances are in magnification; low vision software; mobile phones; braille notetakers and more watch this space for more information.

## **External Events & Activities**

**Please note the events below are not organised or run by Balham Resource Centre so please register your interest or any queries you may have using the contact details in this section.**

### **Bank of England Museum Late**

An exclusive “after hours” audio-described tour of key exhibits in the museum for blind and visually impaired.

Visitors will learn about the Bank’s history and architecture, find out fascinating facts about banknotes in the banknote gallery and will be able to hold a real gold bar.

The tour begins at 6pm and will last approximately one hour. The Museum will close at 8 pm. Light refreshments will be available from 5.30pm. Places are free but strictly limited and advance booking is essential. Sighted companions and guide dogs are welcome.

Date: Friday 15th March 2019

Time: 6.00pm

For more information telephone 020 3461 5545 or email: [education@bankofengland.co.uk](mailto:education@bankofengland.co.uk)

## **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 London Vision.

**Please note that the centre will be closed on from Friday 19<sup>th</sup> April and will reopen again on Monday 29<sup>th</sup> April**

Activity/Event	Venue	Date	Time Start	Time End	Cost £	Frequency	Notes
Dance Class	BRC	Friday 1 <sup>st</sup> March	10:30	12:30	Free	Bi-Weekly	Register in Advance
Knitting Group	BRC	Monday 11 <sup>th</sup> March	10:30	12:30	Free	Weekly	Register in Advance
Art Class	BRC	Monday 11 <sup>th</sup> March	1:30pm	3:30pm	£20 for Winter semester	Weekly	By enrolment only
Low Vision Clinic	BRC	Thursday 14 <sup>th</sup> March	11am	3pm	Free	Monthly	By pre-arranged half hour appointments

Over-50s Social	BRC	Thursday 14 <sup>th</sup> March	2pm	4pm	£5 for transport, 50p for refreshments	Weekly	Transport for Wandsworth residents only
TaiChi	BRC	Thursday 14 <sup>th</sup> March	3PM	5PM	Free	Weekly	Two consecutive one-hour sessions
Knitting Club	BRC	Monday 18 <sup>th</sup> March	10:30	12:30	Free	Weekly	Register in advance
Art Class	BRC	Monday 18 <sup>th</sup> March	1:30	3:30pm	£20 for Winter semester	Weekly	By enrolment only
Over-50s Social	BRC	Thursday 21 <sup>st</sup> March	2pm	4pm	£5 for transport, 50p for refreshments	Weekly	Transport for Wandsworth residents only
TaiChi	BRC	Thursday 21 <sup>st</sup> March	3pm	5pm	Free	Weekly	2 consecutive 1 hour sessions
Healthy & Safe Cookery	BRC	Friday 22 <sup>nd</sup> March	10:30	12:30pm	£4 per class	Bi- Weekly	Register in Advance
knitting Club	BRC	Monday 25 <sup>th</sup> March	10:30	12:30	Free	Weekly	Register in advance
Art Class	BRC	Monday 25 <sup>th</sup> March	1:30pm	3:30pm	£20 for Winter semester	Weekly	By enrolment only



Over-50s Social	BRC	Thursday 28 <sup>th</sup> March	2pm	4pm	£5 for transport, 50p for refreshments	Weekly	Transport for Wandsworth residents only
Fish & Chips Lunch	BRC	Thursday 28 <sup>th</sup> March	2pm onwards		£5	Monthly	Register in Advance
TaiChi	BRC	Thursday 28 <sup>th</sup> March	3pm	5pm	Free	enrolment only	Two consecutive one-hour sessions
Dance Class	BRC	Friday 29 <sup>th</sup> March	10:30	12:30	Free	Bi-weekly	Register in Advance
Knitting Group	BRC	Monday 1 <sup>st</sup> April	10:30am	12:30pm	Free	Weekly	Register in advance
Art Class	BRC	Monday 1 <sup>st</sup> April	1:30pm	3:30pm	£20	Weekly	By enrolment only
BRC Social	TBC	Tuesday 2 <sup>nd</sup> April	6pm	8pm	Attendees to pay for their own food and drinks	Monthly	Register in Advance
Over-50s Social	BRC	Thursday 4 <sup>th</sup> April	2pm	4pm	£5 for transport, 50p for refreshment	Weekly	Transport for Wandsworth residents only

TaiChi	BRC	Thursday 4 <sup>th</sup> April	3pm	5pm	Free	Weekly	Two consecutive one-hour sessions
Healthy & Safe Cookery	BRC	Friday 5 <sup>th</sup> April	10:30am	12:30pm	£4 per class	Bi-weekly	Register in Advance
Knitting Group	BRC	Monday 8 <sup>th</sup> April	10:30am	12:30pm	Free	Weekly	Register in advance
Art Class	BRC	Monday 8 <sup>th</sup> April	1:30pm	3:30pm	£20 each per semester	Weekly	By enrolment only
Yoga	BRC	TBC	10:30am	11:30am	Free	Monthly but dates can vary	Wear comfortable clothing, suitable for light exercise. Register in advance.
Over-50s Social	BRC	Thursday 11 <sup>th</sup> April	2pm	4pm	£5 for transport, 50p for refreshment	Weekly	Transport for Wandsworth residents only
TaiChi	BRC	Thursday 11 <sup>th</sup> April	3pm	5pm	Free	Weekly	2 consecutive 1-hour sessions
Healthy & Safe Cookery	BRC	Friday 12 <sup>th</sup> April	10:30am	12:30pm	£4 per class	Fortnightly	Register in advance
Knitting Club	BRC	Monday 15 <sup>th</sup> April	10:30am	12:30pm	Free	Weekly	Register in advance

Art Class	BRC	Monday 15 <sup>th</sup> April	1:30pm	3:30pm	£20 per person for this semester	Weekly	By enrolment only
Over-50s Social	BRC	Thursday 18 <sup>th</sup> April	2pm	4pm	£5 for transport, 50p for refreshments	Weekly	Transport for Residents only
Fish & Chips Lunch	BRC	Thursday 18 <sup>th</sup> April	2pm onwards		£5	Monthly	Register in advance
TaiChi	BRC	Thursday 18 <sup>th</sup> April	3pm	5pm	Free	Weekly	Two separate consecutive one-hour classes
Low Vision Clinic	BRC	TBC	11am	3pm	Free	Monthly	By pre-arranged half-hour appointments
Knitting Club	BRC	Monday 29 <sup>th</sup> April	10:30am	12:30pm	Free	Weekly	Register in advance
Art Class	BRC	Monday 29 <sup>th</sup> April	1:30pm	3:30pm	£20 per person for this semester	Weekly	By enrolment only