



# Herts Vision Loss



Charity Number 1047148  
Company Number 3033089

"Supporting and empowering people in Hertfordshire with a visual impairment"



## Sight News



### Spring 2022 Issue 161



Let's spring into Spring and enjoy the services that Herts Vision Loss have to offer you!

News from Chief  
Executive  
Officer  
Joanna Carter



Hello from all the team at Herts Vision Loss and welcome to our Spring issue of Sight News. I hope that you are all keeping well.

We continue with our pursuit to find our “forever home”. Our recent offer on a property in Hertford fell through at the valuation stage and so we move on. In the meantime, we are hoping to move to a larger facility at Weltech. This will allow us to hold information days, coffee mornings and drop-in sessions. Our new hub will be interactive and fun, and we hope that we will be able to provide the services that you want. Do let me know if you have any ideas and watch out for what is going on. Have you seen our new Facebook Page? If not, then please do take a look and like us. It is full of the latest information as well as informative articles. If you would like to have anything publicised, then let us know.

We are holding our Curry night again on June 17th. Would you like to come along?

Call us for details and ticket information. More details will follow soon but do get your names down early to secure your place. It is a great event and aimed at bringing people together as well as boosting much needed funds for HVL.

I am pleased to announce that we will be expanding our team this year, and this should allow us to develop new services and reach more people. We are looking for a Vision Loss Advisor. No previous experience is necessary as full training will be given. We are also looking for an experienced Finance Officer. If you or someone you know would like to know more about these positions, then give me a call.

I am pleased that our social groups have been getting together. There have been a variety of fun outings and lunches taking place. The groups are always welcoming to new members so let us know if you want to be part of something special.

As always, my extended thanks to all of you who support HVL. Enjoy this edition of Sight News.

Jo Carter (CEO)



News from our  
Chairman Alex  
Hickinbotham

We hope you are well and looking forward to increasing times when you can meet friends and family and get involved with our social gatherings, we certainly are. The charity has had much to do since our last Sight News. As the Covid pandemic changes its severity and restrictions reduce we have been planning on how we can get back to providing more of our usual interactions and develop new ones.

Our support in the hospital clinics is beginning to increase as is our input to Hertfordshire schools and other organisations. The Counselling service continues, as well as our Befriending and support networks for those who need them. We are completing our first full year working in closer liaison with the Hertfordshire Hearing Advice Service (HHAS) which is a positive development to ensure our users have easy access to both charities.

While we have been cramped in our small office for nearly 2 years, we are now able to expand our temporary premises at the Weltech offices in Welwyn and planning space and opportunities where we can invite our service users, volunteers and others to meet. HVL has not given up on its search for new permanent premises and our Working Group are still pursuing this aim, though finding it is proving a longer project than expected due to availability of suitable properties. But we will continue in this endeavour so we can give the best facilities we can for our sight impaired friends. We are also providing additional sight awareness training to local services and organisations. This enables a wider understanding in the general population on sight impairment needs and ways to help.

We are also arranging to use our trusty minibus in different venues as well as it being used for outings so alerting other residents to our existence and to provide support as required. The vehicle has been nurtured by the HVL staff over the winter and already people are making bookings for its use, which is great that more people are gaining confidence to get out and about socially again.

Should you wish to use it please contact the office.



Our Christmas social event in December was well attended and enjoyed by many which has encouraged us to do more. Therefore, we are restarting our previously popular social events, such as the Curry Night and Quiz Night, details of dates and venues will come later. If there are other ideas you would like us to plan for you, please contact the office and we will see what we can do.

I wish you a happy, busy, and interesting summer.

Alex, Chair HVL

### **Blue Badge Holders, free parking at Lister Hospital**

There is Blue Badge Holder Parking available in both the multi-storey car park and Pay and Display Car Parks. Please note that it is **free of charge** for Blue Badge Holders, please take your Blue Badge to the payment machines before exit and scan the barcode on the reverse to obtain a free exit.

<https://www.sabaparking.co.uk/car-park/lister-hospital-car-park>

Service User Tina

### **St Albans Macular Group**

Meet from 1400-1530 in Homewood Road Church Hall, Homewood Road, St Albans, on the second Tuesday of each month. There is a short talk by a speaker and tea/coffee and a chance to socialise.

In May there will be a presenter from the National Macular Research and Development Group and in June we will have tea at St Michael's Manor.

We are currently not making any charges to members (subs or activity fees) as we are in a strong financial position. We also have a band of volunteer drivers who provide transport for those who need it. I send out a monthly letter to all members reminding them of the date and a bit of detail about the next meeting.

For further information contact Cheri Hunter, 07505 770210, or 01582 768 402, [cherihunter@virginmedia.com](mailto:cherihunter@virginmedia.com)

# VOLUNTEER



Hello Volunteers

I wrote about some of the health benefits in the last issue but there are others.

- Volunteering connects you to others
- One of the more well-known benefits is the impact. Volunteering allows you to make it a better place. Even helping with the smallest tasks can make a real difference. Volunteering is a two-way street: it can benefit you and your family as much as the cause you choose to help.
- Dedicating your time helps you make new friends, expand your network, and boost your social skills
- Make new friends and contacts
- One of the best ways to make new friends and strengthen existing relationships is to commit to a shared activity together. Volunteering is a great way to meet new people, especially if you are new to an area.

- It strengthens your ties to the community and broadens your support network, exposing you to people with common interests, neighbourhood resources and fun and fulfilling activities
- Increase your social and relationship skills.

While some people are naturally outgoing, others are shy. Volunteering gives you the opportunity to practice and develop your social skills, since you are meeting regularly with a group of people with common interests. Once you have momentum, it's easier to branch out and make more friends and contacts.

We would like to congratulate and thank Ellie, who is visually impaired and has been volunteering with us at St. Albans Hospital low vision clinic since last year and telephone befriending one of our service users.

Ellie has secured a full-time job as a Health Care Assistant at Lister Hospital. Whilst this is great news for Ellie it does mean that once again we are looking for a volunteer at St. Albans Hospital. The low vision clinic operates on alternate weeks and we are looking for somebody to cover the Friday session.

No clinical knowledge is required, just the ability to empathise and tell people about the Charity, the services we provide and other help that is available.

I would like to say a special thank you to those of you who have driven the minibus in the last few months. Can anyone who hasn't already expressed an interest in driving the bus please let me know. Also, remember the minibus is available to hire at a reasonable cost so if any of you are planning any family outings give us a ring.

Sue  
[volunteering@hertsvisionloss.org.uk](mailto:volunteering@hertsvisionloss.org.uk)

### **BlindParents.UK**

Supports visually impaired parents, UK-wide. You are welcome to our peer-support groups and activities. They are a growing organisation believing strongly in the power of peer support.

Their active forums provide a place to get to know others. They can also provide sling/buggy support, breast feeding support, and one-to-one support from pregnancy through to starting school and beyond. They welcome enquiries, phone 01905 886252.

### **UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA)**

The UKHSA has launched a new service making it easier for partially sighted people to use lateral flow tests in their home.

The service consists of a new app, the Be My Eyes app, and video-call support service with specially trained NHS Test and Trace staff to help partially sighted people to take lateral flow tests at home. The app connects people with low to moderate vision with agents from 119 through a live video call. Users can use live video assistance from NHS Test and Trace staff to help guide them through how to order, use the tests and register their test results. For further information look at

<https://www.bemyeyes.com/>

Wendela Rang  
Graduate Democratic Services  
Officer  
St Albans City and District Council  
01727 819298 Ext 9298  
[www.stalbans.gov.uk](http://www.stalbans.gov.uk)

## Beating treatment anxiety! John Page, Trustee



Over the last few years, tens of thousands of people with wet forms of macular disease have had their sight loss slowed or halted by anti-VEGF treatments. But the prospect of regular injections into the eye can be frightening, especially if it's your first one. We've collected a few tips on beating the fear and reducing your anxiety. Talk to someone like John Page who is one of a team of Macular Society treatment buddies. He says: "My role is to talk to people on the phone who have been recently diagnosed with wet age-related macular degeneration having injections. As someone who has had wet AMD for 10 years and had more than 60 injections I am able to understand their concerns and can help them allay their fears."

The first step is to help people understand exactly what to expect. "I talk them through the process step by step," John says, "and after that they generally feel much happier and ready to go ahead."

Their main concern is usually that they will be looking directly at someone approaching them with a syringe in hand, ready to put it straight in their eye – this is not the case. They are also worried that it is going to hurt – it doesn't, but there is some discomfort (a bit like having a piece of grit in your eye) for 24 hours and that's all."

Since John took up the role in 2018 he has shared his experience and reassuring words with people and in 2021 he was busier than ever. Fear of needles can be an illogical thing, John says, but talking to someone who knows the process inside out can really help put things in perspective. "One of the people I spoke to was an ex-military medic who had dealt with all kinds of horrific injuries in his time, but was petrified about having an injection."

"I talked him through things, which helped, but in the end, I said that while having an injection was not the most pleasant experience, the alternative, losing your sight, easily trumps it. He agreed and went ahead". If you have questions about your treatment, or want to talk to someone like John about their experience, call our Advice and Information Service on 0300 3030 111 or email

[help@macularsociety.org](mailto:help@macularsociety.org)

## Bishop's Stortford & District Talking Newspaper



Herts Vision Loss has many service users in the Bishop's Stortford and Sawbridgeworth area. If you are one of them or have a connection there, we'd like draw your attention to the local Talking Newspaper in case you are unaware of it.

Here is a summary of the service. The first thing to emphasise is that it is all completely free, including equipment and postage. The second is that it is available to anyone with sight problems or any other physical condition which makes it difficult for that person to read a newspaper, for example because of a stroke.

The basic content is taken from the Bishop's Stortford Independent. This is a high-quality paper which does a good job in covering local issues. From time to time, we also include interviews with local people.



Each week subscribers to our Talking Newspaper receive a wallet via Royal Mail with a recording on a USB stick and we provide a player for the purpose. This is simple to use with good colour contrasts on the controls.

Would you like to try it? One of our volunteers would be happy to come to your house and demonstrate how it all works. There is no obligation – you can discontinue at any time if it's not for you. We do know however that we receive many appreciative messages from listeners and their friends and relatives for the service we provide.

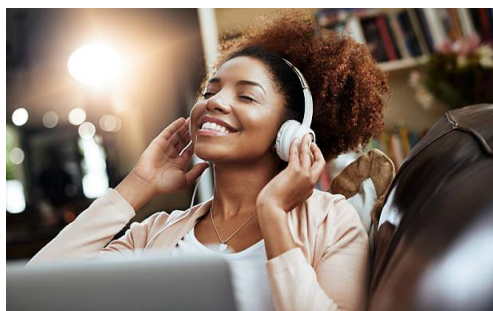
The Talking Newspaper is also available via a Listen Online facility on our website:

[www.bstalkingnewspaper.co.uk](http://www.bstalkingnewspaper.co.uk)

The website option can be used by anyone, whether visually impaired or not. It is also possible to access the recordings via links such as Alexa or an app on your smartphone. If that appeals, please contact us and one of our technicians would be able to help if required. If you are interested or would like more information, please ring Richard Barnett 01279 651270, Tracey Taylor 01279 461096 or leave a message on our mobile: 07918 296764



## Participants Wanted for Music and Well-being Study



Research suggests that music can stimulate the body's natural feel-good chemicals (for example: endorphins, oxytocin). It can help energise our mood and provide an outlet for us to take control of our feelings (for example: manage stress or feelings of anxiety). Listening to music is a popular way to cope with difficult times.

Nurbanu Somani, a PhD research student at Anglia Ruskin University in Cambridge is looking for volunteers aged 18 and over who have lost part or all their sight later in life, and who listen to music online.

Participation in this PhD research study involves listening to music every day for a minimum of 20 minutes for four weeks. Please visit [https://aruspsych.eu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_7ajSwca1JxNoFmK](https://aruspsych.eu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_7ajSwca1JxNoFmK) for more information email [nurbanu.somani@pgr.aru.ac.uk](mailto:nurbanu.somani@pgr.aru.ac.uk) to learn more and register your interest.



Coming up from June 6<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> is Hi VIS 2022, Share the Vision's celebration of 'all things' related to accessible libraries. We are keen to deliver the best service we can for people with visual impairments of all ages and we would welcome your thoughts on how you would like to see Hi VIS fortnight celebrated across libraries in Hertfordshire.

If you are involved in a local support group and would welcome a visit from your local library during this fortnight or some more information about the library service in Hertfordshire, please do get in touch with Terri via [libraries.information@hertfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:libraries.information@hertfordshire.gov.uk)

For more information about our stock and services, please visit our website [www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/libraries](http://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/libraries) or telephone our enquiry team on 0300 123 4049.

## News from Hertfordshire Libraries



Are you using our e-book and e-audiobook collection, available free via BorrowBox? BorrowBox has a range of accessibility features and plenty of new and exciting titles from which to choose.

One feature ideal for visually impaired users is compatibility with Apple's VoiceOver functionality. BorrowBox utilises the built-in screen reader to provide meaningful auditory descriptions of each on-screen element and enables everyone to experience the joys of books and storytelling.

We would be delighted to welcome you to our libraries in person to browse our physical collections too, with plenty of Talking Books on CD and Large Print books too. Library members can place reservations for titles across the county and this service is free if you are blind or have any disability.

## Tuesday Allsorts

2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday of every month

Welwyn Garden City Library

10.00 – 12.00

Allsorts of things, for Allsorts of people

Drop in for a chat; make new friends over tea and biscuits

26<sup>th</sup> April

A Talk on Knebworth House

10<sup>th</sup> May

Hornbeam Wood Hedgehog Sanctuary

24<sup>th</sup> May

Crime Writers Howard Linskey & Mark Billingham

14<sup>th</sup> June

Platinum Jubilee Party

28<sup>th</sup> June

Arson Liaison Dog Handler Nikki With Reqs & Puppy

12<sup>th</sup> July

ZooLab

26<sup>th</sup> July

Travel Tales - Asia

## Our local County Councillors

A big thank you for the ongoing support from our local county councillors. They have generously donated from their budgets for a number of initiatives, including counselling services, technology upgrades and most recently in supporting HVL in the development of an on-line teaching platform. Particular thanks for recent donations go to

- ❖ Bob Deering
- ❖ Marios Artemi
- ❖ Fiona Thomson
- ❖ Mark Watkin
- ❖ Fiona Hill



## FREE GIFT for anyone losing their sight!

Torch Trust, the Christian Sight Loss charity, is offering a free audio Bible player to anyone who is losing their sight. The audio players are the new Megavoice Pathways and feature David Suchet reading the New Testament and Psalms. This small MP3 player has an in-built speaker, pre-installed and re-chargeable batteries and comes with charging cable and headphones. The players have been tested by people who are partially sighted or new to sight loss, with positive feedback about their ease of use and content.

Anyone who is losing their sight can apply to Torch Trust to receive a player. You can find the necessary information at [www.torchtrust.org/pathway](http://www.torchtrust.org/pathway).

For further information [www.torchtrust.org](http://www.torchtrust.org). Our full range of contact options can be found here <https://torchtrust.org/contact/>



Let's face it; care is often a 'taboo' subject, and it is not always easy to talk about, particularly for families and close relatives. One of the reasons the 'care conversation' can be difficult is that receiving help can be perceived as a sign of failure and the start of the loss of personal choice. The family member feels they can no longer cope, they may worry they will have to 'go in a home' and fear they will lose their independence.

At Home Instead, as part of our campaign, we're urging MORE people to have the all-important #CareConversation with loved ones. Having the conversation earlier means loved ones will be happier, healthier, and safer in the long run.

Just like Rosie Smith and TV-legend mum, Lorraine Kelly, we're used to talking about personal experiences and love hearing inspiring stories.

So we are proud sponsors of their [What If? podcast series](#) exploring life's 'what ifs'. Each week they meet celebrity guests to discuss their turning points, thoughts, and decisions.



One difficult conversation you may need to have is about care. So how can you start your family's care conversation?

How to have the #CareConversation with a family member.

If you have concerns about your loved one needing care, here are some tips on how to approach the conversation.

### **Plan what you want to say**

Knowing what you need to discuss beforehand can make sure that you have a focus to the conversation. It might be an informal chat about how your loved one is feeling and how they'd like to continue to live life staying independent. Or you might want to chat about care options so make sure you have this information to hand. It may help to involve other family members and friends, such as siblings and grandchildren, who will be involved in their care.

### **Timing and location**

Choose a time when you and your loved one are relaxed and in a comfortable environment. This will make it easier to listen to each other and be open with each other.

If your loved one does not want to talk about the topic when you first bring it up, try again later. It is often not just one conversation; it takes several chats over time to establish how your loved one is feeling.

### **Listen**

It is important that you take time to really hear your loved ones, be patient with them and encourage them, making clear you have their best interests at heart. Find out how your loved one is managing. Is there anything they are struggling with at home? How do they feel they are coping and is there any support they would like? What would their preferences be? While you might not be able to meet all their wishes, it is important to take them into consideration.

For more information on how Home Instead Welwyn and Hatfield may be able to help you, visit our website

[www.homeinstead.co.uk/welwyn](http://www.homeinstead.co.uk/welwyn)

or contact us directly on 01707 240 650



## Household Support Grant Available

Communities 1<sup>st</sup> are supporting St Albans and District Council to distribute a Household Support Grant to people in need who live in the St Albans and District Area.

Eligible recipients can receive a one-off grant of £60 towards food and/ or a one-off £60 grant towards fuel. The definition of fuel is quite broad- it can be put towards heating, or fixing a boiler or heating etc.

If you work with people, you believe might be eligible, please tell them about the grant and encourage them to contact [help@communities1st.org.uk](mailto:help@communities1st.org.uk) or to call Communities 1<sup>st</sup> Wellbeing Services on 020 8207 5115.

If you work with organisations who may support eligible people, please tell them about the grant and encourage them to signpost their clients. Please note - some other local organisations such as Citizens Advice St Albans and District, St Albans and Hertsmere Women's Refuge and also St Albans Foodbank are also distributing this fund.

This grant could be a lifeline for some people, so we really need to get it out to those who would benefit.

## Hertfordshire Travel Wallet Scheme

Just a little reminder about the Orange Travel Wallet that our citizens are entitled to if they have a sensory need or physical disability. This is a bright orange wallet to keep a bus pass in. It is a tool to notify the driver that the person with it has it may need some support or a little extra time and patience.

You can apply for them at the link below.

[www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/adult-social-services/transport-for-older-people-and-disabled-people/travel-wallet.aspx](http://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/adult-social-services/transport-for-older-people-and-disabled-people/travel-wallet.aspx)

## Sawbridgeworth's Carols on Fair Green 24<sup>th</sup> December 2021

Despite attendance being lower because of Covid concerns and pouring rain, Sawbridgeworth's Carols on Fair Green was an enjoyable seasonal event. HVL is very grateful for the £500 cheque the Rotary Club of Sawbridgeworth and District gave us.

Thank you.

## George Fuller Club for the Blind Celebrates 70 years



The George Fuller Club for the Blind and Partially Sighted for residents from Hoddesdon, Broxbourne, Cheshunt and Hertford, which meets once a month on the third Monday of the month at Bushby Hall in Wormley, celebrated the club's 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary with a dinner at the end of September last year.

The dinner was attended by the club members and helpers plus the High Sheriff of Hertfordshire Lionel Wallace DL, our local MP Sir Charles Walker, plus the Mayor and Mayoress of Broxbourne, David and Lesley Taylor and Councillor Mark Mills-Bishop.

After a three-course dinner the members and guests were entertained by singer Cliff Jones.

The club was also recognised by Her Majesty the Queen when they received a letter from Windsor Castle from her Lady-In-Waiting Dame Annabel Whitehead who said "The Queen wishes me to write and thank you for your letter, from which Her Majesty was interested to learn about The George Fuller Club for the Blind and Partially Sighted which is celebrating its 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary".

**Health Action Day**  
**Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> April 10.00am-2.00pm**

Royston Leisure Centre  
Woodcock Road  
Royston SG8 7XT  
01763 255190

[Enquiries.royston@sll.co.uk](mailto:Enquiries.royston@sll.co.uk)

Stalls and Advice  
Herts Vision Loss  
Citizens Advice  
CDA Herts  
NHS Primary Care Network  
Healthy Hub North Herts  
Fun with Food Workshops  
Children's Craft Workshops  
Mind in Mid Herts  
Diabetes UK

Pre-booking required.  
Call 01462 474111 or  
email [healthyhub@north-herts.gov.uk](mailto:healthyhub@north-herts.gov.uk)



Dedicated to improving the lives  
of visually impaired people

Telephone: 07985 536216

[www.fourswansvision.org.uk](http://www.fourswansvision.org.uk)

[fourswansvision@gmail.com](mailto:fourswansvision@gmail.com)

Registered Charity Number- 1176514

Four Swans Vision members really enjoyed themselves at the Brick Lane theatre in early February for the pantomime and are looking forward to returning in early June to celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee.

Some of our members were at the opening night of the Spotlight theatre in Broxbourne to enjoy the show, That'll Be the Day. We certainly enjoyed singing along to the hits that were being played. A few days later members got themselves up to London to see the show Pretty Woman at the Savoy theatre.

We have a return trip to Brick Lane scheduled for June and hopefully a trip to Brooklands, a transport museum. We are working on a few more trips and days out in the summer.

Alan, and all at Four Swans Vision

## Exercise

A lot of us have been less active recently, with knock-on effects on our flexibility, stamina and balance. Ease yourself back into exercise with some at-home workouts specifically designed for people with sight loss.



4Find audio-only workouts, from chair yoga to interval training, by searching youtube.com for 'eyes free fitness'. 4British Blind Sport has collected several sets of accessible workouts at [britishblindsport.org.uk/active-at-home](http://britishblindsport.org.uk/active-at-home). 4Move it or Lose it workouts focus on simple ways to maintain your strength, flexibility and balance. You can order a CD or series of DVDs from [moveitorloseit.co.uk](http://moveitorloseit.co.uk) or by calling 0800 612 0450.

# The Therapy Space

Spring is here! Flowers have been popping up all over the place, there are buds and blossoms on the trees and definite signs of brighter, warmer days. Spring marks the start of new beginnings and of hope and although this is all very lovely and positive, I find there is also something rather poignant about the end of Winter. Perhaps it's the reminder that another year has gone by as have the days of snuggling in front of fires and eating stodgy food. Nevertheless, there is a sense of loss, a ripple of sorrow, a sigh of nostalgia. A sign of Grief.

## **What is Grief?**

Grief is a natural response to loss. Many of us think of Grief as related to losing a loved one but it can be anything from being made redundant, getting a divorce, experiencing a health-related event, misplacing an object of sentimental value or perhaps moving house, job or school.

Loss is an inevitable part of life and the Grief that follows is connected to any life experience that brings with it a sense of suffering, pain or emotional overwhelm.

These feelings are often accompanied by shock, disbelief, anger, guilt, and deep sadness. The more significant the loss is to you, the more intense that sense of Grief is. No single Grief experience is the same and as such, neither is the reaction. Grief is a very personal and a very subjective thing.

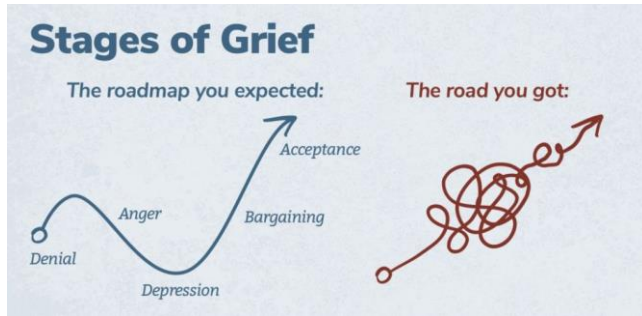
## **The Grieving Process.**

How we deal with Grief and Loss depends on many things including personality, significance of loss, coping mechanisms, support systems and life experiences.

There are various models and stages of Grief, the most well-known of these is Kubler-Ross' 5 stages: Denial, Anger, Bargaining, Depression and Acceptance. While this is a good starting point to help understand Grief, it's important to know that these stages are not linear and not every stage is experienced. Someone may well flit between Denial and Acceptance and sometimes feel Anger but never Bargaining.



For many, Grief can feel a bit like this



There is no rhyme or reason to feeling Grief. We can feel ok one day and then hear a piece of music or smell a specific scent that reminds us of our loss. Sometimes it can come out of the blue when doing something like the shopping, hoovering or cleaning the bathroom. It might be a daily reminder or perhaps its presence is stronger around specific dates.

It can affect us both emotionally and physically. We may swing from moments of happiness to moments of deep sadness, and that can bring with it feelings of guilt and shame. Scientific research has also shown that Grief can increase inflammation, lower immune systems, alter eating habits, increase tiredness, or deplete one of energy *and* impact our cognitive abilities; how we think, concentrate, or make decisions.

Grief can feel omnipotent, scary, and overwhelmingly hard to get a handle on because it is so changeable, contradictory and because there are so many beliefs and myths that surround the coping mechanisms for Grief and Loss. So, let's bust some!

**Myth 1: Ignoring your pain and suffering will make it go away.**

The truth is that real recovery only comes from facing adversity and proactively dealing with it. Pretending it has not happened may be the path of least resistance but it is not a healing one. Pushing away the emotions of pain and suffering only make them more powerful because they simply have not been processed. Just like any physical pain, emotional pain is a reminder that we need to pay attention and care for what is hurting.

**Myth 2: Grieving has a time limit.**

Not at all. Grief cannot be rushed and how long it takes will vary from one person to the next. The process of healing is a gradual one, sometimes it can feel as though we take one step forward and two steps back. Patience and kindness are key, whether that is directed at yourself or someone else.

### **Myth 3: Talking about Grief and Loss burdens others.**

In fact, sharing feelings and thoughts facilitates the mourning process and not only helps untangle the multi layered emotions and feelings but can also help develop new insights. Talking also tackles the stigma that emotional pain is bad and should be unvoiced and unheard. The more we talk about emotional pain, the better prepared and skilled we become at dealing with it. Think of it as fire drills. We have fire drills so that in the event of a real emergency we already know what to do and have strategies in place. Conversations about emotional pain are the same. The more we reach out and share, the more familiar and better equipped we become at managing painful situations.

It might be useful to identify people you feel able to reach out to or perhaps seek counselling. Both can be a real lifeline when emotional pain feels too much.

### **Myth 4: Crying means you are weak and helpless.**

Expressing pain and sadness helps to release feelings and models to those around you that there is no shame in crying.

Sometimes it gives permission for others to also show their vulnerability and this collective sense of togetherness can be very healing.

Tears are also our bodies natural healing response. Basal Tears protect eyes from debris and bacteria, Reflex Tears wash out irritants like fumes and chemicals and Emotional Tears are believed to slow down heart rates and release hormones that regulate and soothe the body. These tears have pain relieving and calming effects. It's good to cry!

### **Myth 5: Not crying means you do not care.**

There is no right or wrong way to express and show sadness and pain. Since loss is a very intimate and individual experience not everyone will feel the same depth of Grief or respond in the same way to the same loss. Some people may prefer to mourn in private. Sometimes the feelings of shock and disbelief are still the most overwhelming and over-riding emotions being processed so the tears may come later.

### **Myth 6: Moving on signifies forgetting.**

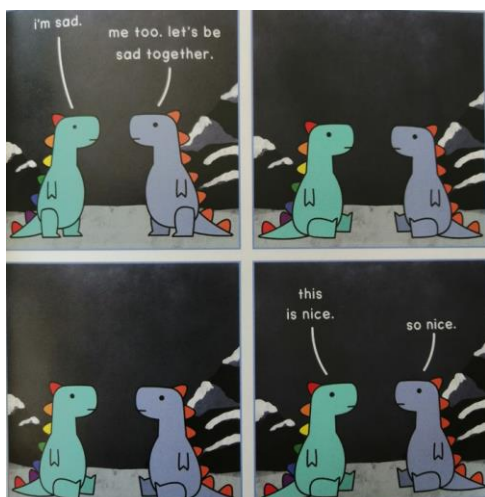
Moving on is in fact a sign of acceptance of the loss where the loss has integrated and assimilated into becoming part of you and the life you now lead.

It is not forgotten and in fact it may still give you a nudge now and again but the pain will be less intense and more manageable.

### Seeking support

The pain of Grief and Loss can be so overwhelming that it can quite often cause a withdrawal from the world and while this may be necessary or helpful to begin with, it may start to hinder the healing process. While it may be easier to retreat and isolate, it is important to remember that a big part of the healing process is talking, sharing and feeling supported whether that is through family or friends, bereavement groups, counselling, reading books, listening to Grief podcasts or NHS audio guides.

The experience of Grief and Loss may be unique but you are not alone. Taking care of yourself emotionally and physically while seeking the support networks that work for you is fundamental to the healing process. Reach out!



As always, our counselling team here at Herts Vision Loss are here to support you and are but a phone call away. Do get in touch [earsforeyes@hertsvisionloss.org](mailto:earsforeyes@hertsvisionloss.org), call 07825 330649 or 01707 324680.

Other useful links and resources:  
<https://www.minded.org.uk>  
<https://www.griefshare.org/findagroup>  
<https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/self-help/guides-tools-and-activities/mental-wellbeing-audio-guides/>



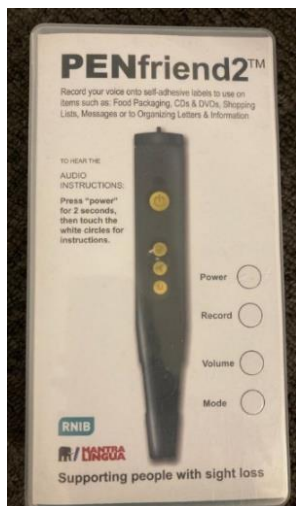
HVL is one of the worthy causes supported by St Albans District Community. 60% of ticket sales will go to good causes. 50% to your cause and 10% to a fund supporting good causes in St Albans District. Our funds are sent directly to your account every month. Plus, there is a chance to win £25,000 jackpot every week!

Buy a St Albans District lottery ticket and support HVL.

## Articles for Sale

### Penfriend 2

Handset, Instruction booklet, stickers, takes 2 x AAA batteries  
£60 ONO



### Olympus Voice Recorder

DP 311 Instruction booklet and fully working handset, no box, takes 2 x AAA batteries



### A selection of coloured canes

They measure 125cm. Blue, pink, purple, yellow, orange, black and green.

Please get in touch with Diane if you are interested in any of these items by emailing [angelofthelock@googlemail.com](mailto:angelofthelock@googlemail.com) or phone 07971 849 282

PROFESSIONAL  
**Vision**  
SERVICES LTD



01462 420751

01707 324680

## Information Focus Day

Professional Vision Services Exhibition

In conjunction with Herts Vision Loss

To be held on the following dates, no appointment necessary, at

Professional Vision Services, 90 Walsworth Road, Hitchin SG4 9SX  
13<sup>th</sup> May, 19<sup>th</sup> May, 31<sup>st</sup> May, 7<sup>th</sup> June, 14<sup>th</sup> June and 21<sup>st</sup> June.

Tea and coffee will be served.

Come along to our low vision drop-in day when we will be demonstrating all the latest technology and equipment for the visually impaired