



NoISe

Issue 103
Autumn 2018

NoISe (Northumberland Information Service for People with Vision Impairment) is the quarterly newsletter of the Northumberland County Blind Association.

NCBA wins funding to pilot accessible heating controls

Northumberland County Blind Association is one of six UK charities that have been awarded funding for sustainable energy projects in the first round of grants from the Energy Industry Voluntary Redress Scheme.

Energy Saving Trust, which was appointed by Ofgem to distribute the Energy Redress Scheme monies to eligible charitable organisations, announced the first phase of funding following a rigorous assessment period.

The Energy Redress Scheme is funded by voluntary payments made by energy companies following enforcement and compliance action by Ofgem.

The overarching aim of the Energy Redress Scheme is to distribute available funds to support energy consumers in vulnerable situations and the development of products or services which would provide a benefit for certain groups of energy consumers.

The first round of funding will

see £40,000 go towards a community heating network in Stirlingshire, £75,000 for the creation of a one-stop energy advice service in Rochdale, Tameside and Bury, and nearly £40,000 for the creation of a new programme to help make heating controls accessible for visually impaired people in Northumberland.

Other successful applications include £63,000 for a 20-month programme to help 5,000 vulnerable residents in Wirral, £35,000 for an innovative cooking and lighting energy saving programme on Lewis, and £28,000 to create a voluntary energy champion programme in Wigan.

Mike Thornton, Group Director of Operations at Energy Saving Trust said: “The first round of awards for the Energy Redress Scheme demonstrate the ability of charities and their partners to help consumers, especially vulnerable consumers, with their energy bills.”

Anthony Pygram, Director of Conduct and Enforcement at Ofgem, said: “We are pleased to see the first awards to charities of payments from energy companies to the Voluntary Redress Scheme following Ofgem’s enforcement and compliance activity. These grants will help vulnerable customers throughout the UK through a number of schemes, as well as investing in new and innovative products and services for consumers.”

Sandra Donkin, NCBA’s Organisational Development Manager said: “The project for Northumberland has been designed to pilot four different kinds of heating control solutions in the households of people with a visual impairment.

The four different solutions will be evaluated to identify which one provides the most benefit in terms of operability in relation to the level of sight loss of the householder; cost and practicality to enable the different interventions to be

available to all.

Everyone participating in the pilot will be assessed by a specialist in Visual Processing to determine which system is most likely to be effective and any other support that they might need.

Advice on energy saving and management will also be given as part of the pilot.”

If you would like to be part of this exciting pilot please call Sandra on 01670 514316 or send an e mail to info@ncba.org.uk

Julie's journey

“I got fed up with being a passenger in my own life”

I got tired of being a passenger in my own life and felt the time was right to accept my sight loss and move forward.

Three years ago I lost the sight in my right eye. It happened quite quickly over the course two days as the result of a detached retina. Four operations later the consultants told me nothing further could be done, leaving me with no peripheral or lower vision; they couldn't remove the oil they'd put in to hold the remainder of the retina in place as it would fall away, so the small square of vision I still have, is a blur of smudged images.

I asked about the likelihood of the same happening to the other eye and was told 'one in a million' and that I'd been 'unlucky'.

A year to the month later, I was that unlucky one in a million, when the same happened to the left eye.

After another two operations later, (six now in total), I'd lost the central vision in my left eye and also had macular oedema which changes how I see colour. I finally had to accept my sight had almost gone and life would never be the same again.

I had to give up driving and leave my job, both of which I loved. I felt myself go inward, but I didn't cry, get angry or even grieve for the loss of my sight. I comforted myself by saying 'this is life changing not life threatening' and by thinking I'd been dealt the better hand, I accepted it. My spirit inside however, flat lined, life seemed too difficult to do alone. My husband Ian offered me great support. He became my eyes (and sometimes my voice), I became a passenger in my own life.

So what changed and how did I get to where I am now?

After moving to Northumberland I met with the local rehab team, who offered me long cane training. Ian and I both signed up for a Living with Sight Loss Course with NCBA. These two things marked the turning point of my journey. My life was nudged out of 'stale mate' and I realised I had to learn to do things differently to move forward and regain my

independence.

Long cane training gave me the confidence to get out and about and attending the Living with Sight Loss Course gave me so much more! It gave me a feeling of enablement, things I once thought impossible were now possible. It was great to meet others in a similar position as myself and a relief to hear stories and share hints and tips on how to cope with everyday situations. Hearing about the range of support and benefits available has been life changing and I'll always thank my lucky stars that we signed up for the course. There were even sim specs that partners could try on to simulate sight loss, something that has stayed with Ian even now, giving him an even deeper understanding of my experiences.

Following on from the mobility session Ian and I signed up for 'friends and family sighted guiding training', and I've since undertaken further mobility training which has given me the

confidence to do things I once thought were impossible.

I wanted the confidence to reach four goals, one, walk to the local shop. Two, to walk to the hairdressers. Three, to get to the supermarket and four, to get to the NCBA's offices in Morpeth which entailed two buses! With the help and support I've received I'm proud to say all of these have now been accomplished, although it wasn't all plain sailing.

My mobility training had been building me up to the biggest and longest journey, to NCBA's office in Morpeth, this involved a bus change in Ashington.

On the day of my planned trip I was due to meet my guide at the bus changeover. After waiting half an hour I realised she wasn't coming and had no means of contacting her. I was left with two choices, go home or continue alone. As scary as it was I decided to try to get

there alone, hoping I'd get the right buses and then be able to find my way to the office when I got off the other end. I can't begin to put into words the sense of achievement and pride arriving at NCBA gave me. The staff were so welcoming and took a photo of me in the garden to prove to my guide that I had made it! I later found out she had been ill and was unable to make this trip with me.

I feel like a new chapter in my life is just beginning. I'm starting to feel like me again and am regaining some of the me that's been lost these last three years. I'm also getting up to date with some of the technology that was mentioned in the Living with Sight Loss course which is proving challenging but with their support I will conquer it.

Going forward I'd like to be more involved in some of the support and social groups run by NCBA. There are so many to choose from, which is why I wanted one of my first routes to be how to get there! I'm particularly

interested in yoga and meditation but there's craft, gardening, days out, book clubs and much more.

Ian and I now have a motorhome and we are keen to get out and about as much as possible, and although I can't see the detail as I once did, I can still tell, feel and breathe the beauty in the peace and tranquillity of the places we visit.

I was invited back to the next Living with Sight Loss –

Confidence Building course to share my story, along with the coping strategies I've developed, with a new group of participants and I enjoyed it so much I will be returning as a facilitator - watch this space!

To anyone who is thinking about joining a course but isn't quite sure if it's for you, my advice is just do it. You've everything to gain and nothing to lose. For me it's been life changing. Hope to see you soon!



Photograph with Julie standing in the garden at NCBA's office in Morpeth.

Have you lived with sight loss for a while but unsure of what



support there is for you? **Join our**

Living with Sight Loss Courses

Confidence Building

In Morpeth every Monday

from 10th September until 1st October

1 pm to 4 pm

at NCBA, Reiver House, Staithes Lane, NE61 1TD

In Alnwick every Monday

from 15th October until 5th November

9.30 am to 12.00 pm

at Weavers' Court, Swordy Drive, NE66 1SZ

Gain confidence and knowledge through interactive workshops and talks. Share experiences, advice and support and hear how others

have overcome the challenges of sight loss.

These courses are run in conjunction with RNIB

RNIB Supporting people with sight loss

For information contact
01670 514316

Northumberland County Blind Association

Reiver House, Staithes Lane Morpeth NE61 1TD

www.ncba.org.uk email: info@ncba.org.uk Registered charity No 1102836



Fontburn Fishing Competition 2018

by Karen Stuart, NCBA Volunteer Co-ordinator

It was an early start for staff and volunteers of NCBA on Friday 27th July. Thankfully the day dawned bright and there was no sign of the forecast rain and thunder on the horizon. When Sheila, Susan, Susan's son Carl and myself arrived around 6am, the rangers were already there and were able to help us get set up quickly and give valuable advice to the newbies. When the competitors started arriving, we were prepared and the queue formed quickly. Many of the regulars had turned up and were raring to go, but were happy to stop and buy raffle tickets for the fishing rods, whisky and other great prizes, so much so that we ran out of tickets in one book and had to rely on the two remaining books of raffle tickets to satisfy demand.

Once registered, we could see the contestants making their way around the lake to their preferred vantage points and

setting up their equipment, everyone anticipating a productive day. Rangers were on the prowl, making sure no-one was trying to get an early start before the 8am kick off. Last minute arrivals were registered, the hooter was sounded, then all around the lake's banks lines were cast and the day's fishing began.

After the competition had started and the pressure was off, it was time for a cup of coffee for staff and volunteers. Once fortified, we set out two at a time to go around the lake to have a chat with the contestants and see how they were doing. Due to the hot weather we've had, most of those taking part were worried that the fish wouldn't come to the surface and stay in the depths of the lake instead. Quite a few hoped that the dark clouds hovering on the horizon would come closer and give a huge downpour, however apart from a few odd rumbles of thunder and

some spots of rain, the weather stayed on the dry side.

Peter, our volunteer photographer, arrived about an hour into the competition, and once permission for photos had been agreed, he started taking pictures of the contestants and the action.



Picture of one of the competitors

Reports of fish being landed started drifting around the lake, and a lot of the activity was being reported on the side of the lake closest to the lodges.

Kayla Carr, one of our young competitors, got off to a great start and showed everyone else how to do it by landing six decent sized trout in quick succession! She went on to bag

First Prize in the Junior competition with a combined weight of 10lb 3oz.



Picture with Kayla Carr showing her winning catch

The hooter soon sounded to end the competition at 3pm, and everyone made their way back from around the lake to the lodge, ready for the weigh-in.

First place went to Brian Bickerton for his seven fish with

a combined weight of 12lb and 4oz



Picture with Brian Bickerton,
the winner

Joint second place went to John Dunn and Robert Stone.

Heaviest fish went to Shean Langley with a single fish weight of 3lb 14½oz.

The Junior competition was equally well represented. After Kayla took the first place, she was closely followed by Olivia Appleby, who submitted four fish with a combined weight of

7lb. Heaviest fish and winner of the Greg Robinson Memorial Trophy went to James Neave, with a weight of 2lb.

Finally, the Golden Ticket winner was Mr G. Bamford, who won seven days free fishing at Fontburn and we also had some satisfied winners of the NCBA on-the-day raffle.

Once everyone had chatted, passed on the day's news and competitors headed home, the NCBA Fontburn Fishing Competition was over for another year. Staff and volunteers, aided by the rangers, packed away our equipment and got ready to head off ourselves, thankful that the threatened rain had held off most of the day. However little did we know it was waiting for us when we got back to the coast!

In all, the day raised £673.94 to help fund NCBA's vital services across Northumberland. A huge thank you to all our competitors and to Fontburn Rangers Will, Stephen and Steve. **Well done everyone!!!**

Karen Ogle, Charity Swimmer Raises a massive £1014.17 for NCBA!!

Karen Ogle, a physiotherapist from Rennington near Alnwick decided to take up the challenge of a 5k swim across Lake Windermere in June to raise funds for the blind and partially sighted of Northumberland – a cause close to her heart after her uncle became blind at the age of 5.

Karen took up swimming when she was 34 after major back surgery and, after turning 50 decided to begin competing in open water swimming challenges across Derwentwater, Conniston and Lake Windermere to raise funds for charities such as MacMillan and Cancer Research.

NCBA would like to thank Karen for a fantastic swim and fundraising effort – your support is invaluable and we send our heartfelt gratitude

and appreciation.

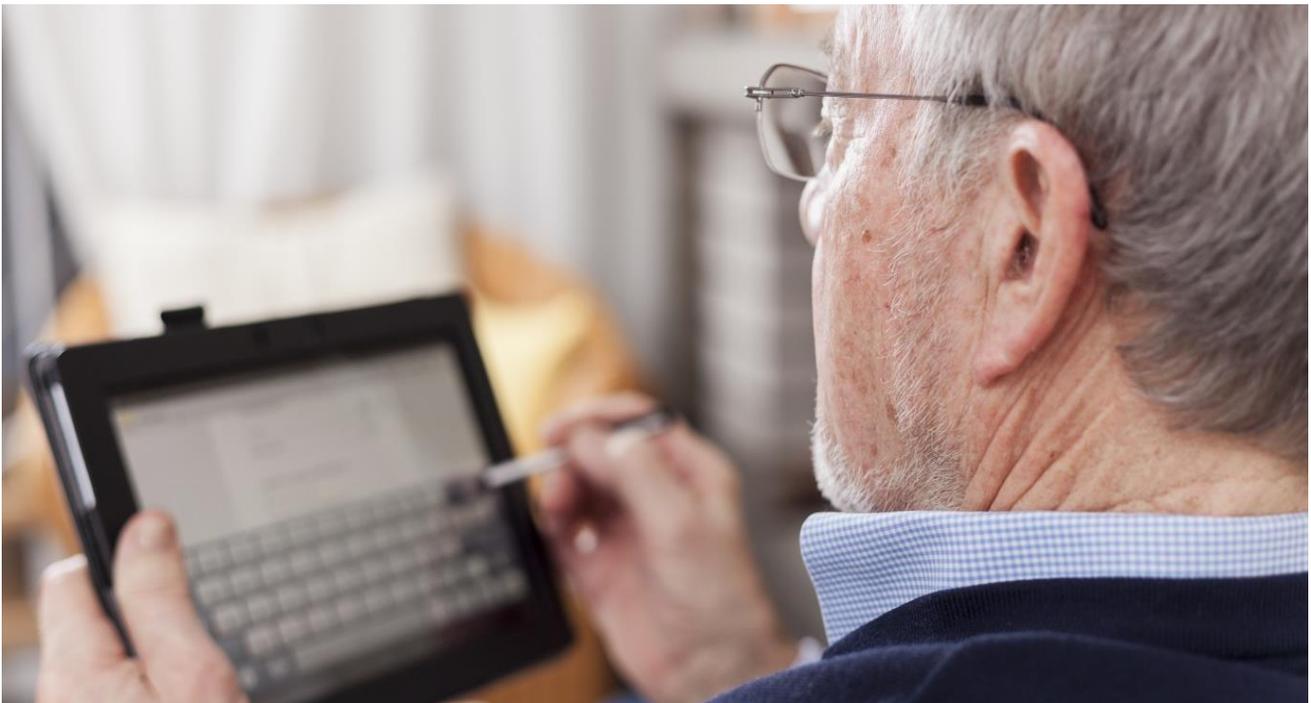


Photo with Karen Ogle at the swimming competition

If you wish to fundraise for Northumberland County Blind Association and support the delivery of vital services to blind and partially sighted people across Northumberland, please call Karen Stuart on 01670 514316 or e-mail volunteer@ncba.org.uk

Information and Equipment Day Event

on Thursday 6th September 2018 from 10:30 to 14:30
at the Scout Hut, Staithes Lane, Morpeth, NE61 1TD



Come along and try the latest equipment from some of the national leading suppliers of low vision aids and solutions for blind and partially sighted people

- **Associated Optical**
- **Enhanced Vision**
- **HumanWare**
- **Optelec**
- **Orcam**
- **Pamtrad**

Free information and advice will be available from the following sight loss organisations

- **Northumberland County Blind Association**
- **British Wireless For The Blind**
- **Macular Society**
- **Guide Dogs For The Blind**
- **Blind Veterans UK**



The family of Ms Irene Bruce who sadly passed away recently has carried out one of her wishes and kindly donated her ClearView C desktop Video Magnifier to Northumberland County Blind Association so that it could be sold to help us raise vital funds to support the work of our charity.

Due their generosity at this difficult time we were able to sell the video magnifier and to raise £300. Mr Wilkinson who purchased the video

magnifier told us “since being diagnosed with sight loss my wife and I have been looking for ways to improve our lives. Audio books are great, but we liked to read ourselves and many of the devices that would help us to do this are very expensive and out of our price range. Having the opportunity to purchase a piece of equipment that had been bequeathed to NCBA at an affordable price is just fantastic, it will make a big difference to our lives.”

If you would like to make a donation to NCBA on behalf of a loved one please call Ruth Speirs on 01670 514316.

**Alternatively cheques can be made payable to:
Northumberland County Blind Association and posted to:
Northumberland County Blind Association, Reiver House,
Staites Lane, Morpeth, Northumberland, NE61 1TD**

Thank you for Supporting us!

Northumberland County Blind Association would like to thank the following three grant giving organisations for their generous donations over the last few months:

- **Royal Victoria Trust (£2,000)**

- **Joicey Trust (£4,000)**

- **Rothley Trust (£1,000)**

Their valuable contributions will enable us to continue to provide services that support blind and partially sighted people living in Northumberland.

Volunteer Thank You At Reiver House 13th June 2018

We just want to say thank you to everyone who came along to our Volunteer Thank You event here at Reiver House in June. It was a wonderful day and it was fantastic to see so many people turn out for it, some travelling quite a distance to attend. Here are some of the quotes from the beautiful cards we received afterwards:

-“Thank you for a fantastic Volunteers Appreciation Day, I enjoyed it very much.” From Liz

-“It was really lovely to meet you all and to meet some of the other volunteers. Mum thoroughly enjoyed meeting people and being out and about.”
Fran and her mum Evelyn

-“Thank you for a super Volunteers Event yesterday! Well done.” From Kath

-“Thank you for a very pleasant afternoon – the rooms were so full of colour; that certainly enticed me to eat the goodies!”
From Doris

We hold our Volunteer Thank You events in June and in winter, just before Christmas. If you have never been to one of our events before, try to make it along to our next one. Come along and meet us all and enjoy the food and company. It’s a day where we get to spoil you as much as possible, watch out for your invitation in the post - you really don’t want to miss it!



Photograph with volunteers enjoying afternoon tea at the Volunteer Thank You event in June

In Recognition & Appreciation of our Longest Serving Volunteer Edna Charlton, Chair of Blyth Social Club

“You make a living by what you get, but you make a life by what you give” ~ Winston Churchill

Edna Charlton, NCBA's longest serving volunteer has certainly made a life by giving. She began her volunteering career with Blyth Blind Club just after the 2nd World War and ever since has devoted her time and compassion to a Cause she holds dear.

Alongside a dedicated team of volunteers (including her late mother), Edna has worked tirelessly - week in, week out to organise a variety of activities for Blind Club members including tournaments, trips away, gardening and meals out as well as keeping the club afloat with various fundraising events & activities for over 70 years.

Edna you are an inspiration to us all and on behalf of NCBA and in particular, Blyth Social Club members, we thank you from the bottom of our hearts for all your years of service and devotion to the Club.

“What we have done for ourselves alone dies with us; what we have done for others and the world remains, and is, immortal. “ ~Albert Pike



Photograph with Edna celebrating her birthday

Congratulations to our 100 Club Prize Winners

100 Club	1st Prize	2nd Prize	3rd Prize
May	Mrs S Johnson	Ms K Yule	Mrs M Hart
June	Mrs D Bassam	Mrs B Swarbrick	Mrs M Tiffin
July	Mr D Loader	Ms M E Campbell	Mr A Spiers

Help people with sight loss get out and about



This inspiring session will enable you to safely and confidently guide someone with sight loss

Join us for a Friends & Family session

in association with **Northumberland County Blind Association**
Reiver House, Staithes Lane, Morpeth NE61 1TD

"The training was brilliant, we did lots of practical activities and by the end of it I felt really confident in my guiding skills."

* November session to be held at Weaver's Court, Alnwick NE66 1SZ

More details below

Next sessions will be on:

Fri 21st September

1pm - 3pm

Mon 12th November *

10am - 12pm

Wed 5th December

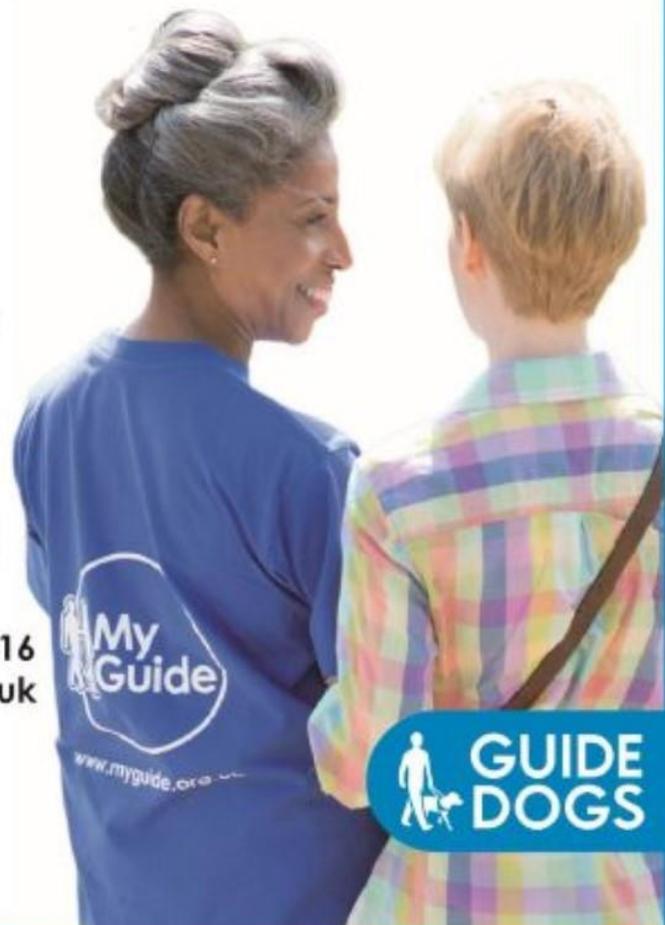
1pm - 3pm

To book places on this training, please call Karen on 01670 514316 or email Karen.Stuart@ncba.org.uk



Northumberland County Blind Association

Registered charity in England and Wales (209617)
and in Scotland (SC038979) 01/14 7178



Alnwick Talking Newspaper

Alnwick LIONS Club prepares and issues a talking newspaper for blind and visually impaired people of the North East Northumberland area based around Alnwick. This is roughly from about Seahouses, Belford, Wooler in the North to Morpeth and Felton area in the South.

We currently have around forty recipients of the audio paper to whom we supply an electronic player to listen to the USB sticks, that we send out weekly to them.

The USB sticks contain articles from the weekly edition of the Northumberland Gazette that are selected and read by a group of volunteers from within the community and prepared on the same morning that the newspaper comes out in print.

This ensures that those who receive it are kept up to date with local news at around the same time as those using the paper version.

The audio newspaper is also circulated to the local hospital radio which broadcasts to most of the hospitals throughout Northumberland.

The newspaper was originally issued on magnetic tape but over the years quality did not keep up with advancing technology so we decided to upgrade to a digital version in 2017 which necessitated an outlay of many thousands of pounds on new equipment. This amenity is entirely free to the blind or visually impaired listeners as Alnwick LIONS Club covers all equipment, postage and maintenance costs etc. No IT skill is required to listen to the newspaper as the players are designed for the visually impaired.

Anyone interested in either receiving this amenity or knows of someone who would benefit from it in the area should contact Richard Hall on (01665 603729) or email randj@richardhall70.plus.com for further information.



Photograph with the Alnwick Talking Newspaper's volunteers and guests, around a table in the recording room. From left to right: Lorna Ternent, Mick Keane, Alan Symmonds Mayor of Alnwick, Sandra Shepherd (LIONS Technician), Grant Welsh of Specsavers, Brian Gardiner and Gillie Stapleton.

Morpeth Talking Newspaper

Morpeth Talking Newspaper produces a FREE fortnightly newspaper magazine that is distributed to sight impaired local residents by a team of volunteers.

The newspaper was started in 1990 by Morpeth's schoolgirl Jenny Resigno as part of her Duke of Edinburgh Award and has been produced ever since! The Newspaper is produced at the premises of CONTACT in Morpeth.

We have eight different local reading groups and we like to think that each group has its own style and character that it brings to its own edition.

Our editions are based mainly on the Morpeth Herald, but also introduce articles from 'Inside Morpeth', a 'Dates for your Diary' section and other local news.

If you would like to receive regular audio files or know someone who would, please get in touch with Barbara Ross. on 0771 898 9566.



Picture with two volunteers at a table recording the Morpeth Talking Newspaper

Conference and meeting room hire at NCBA, Reiver House, Morpeth

Meeting Room Hire

A 520sq ft. room seating up to 25 people with kitchenette including tea and coffee making facilities. £80 for a full day or £15 per hour (or part there of).

Recording Studio Hire

This room can be used as office space for two people or as a small recording studio with free equipment hire, 102sq ft. £40 per day or £10 per hour.

**For further details call 01670 514316
or e-mail: info@ncba.org.uk**

Got a passion for gardening?

**Would you like to share
that passion with others?**

One of our gardening groups, **Bloomers** (based at Hepscott Park Garden Centre) is in need of a new leader to help take them forward and keep this well-loved and much-needed service for visually impaired people going.

Interested?

**Please get in touch on
(01670) 514316**

for more information

Please note: the Group Leader will have responsibility for a small budget for the group, so would need to be comfortable handling money.



Table Top Sale

Friday 28th September

St Mary's Church Hall

Market Place, Blyth

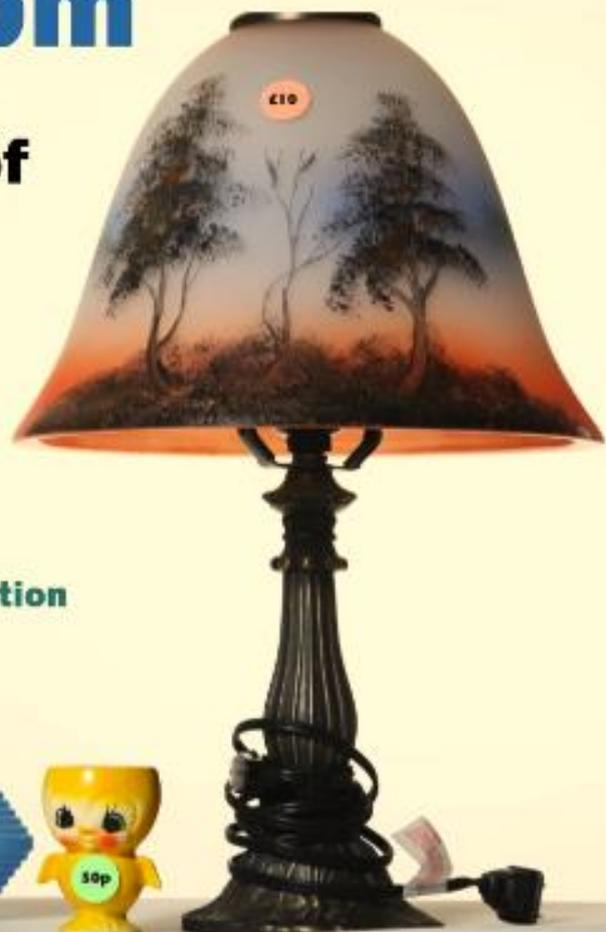
**Toys • CDs • DVDs • Ornaments • Plants
Pictures • Home Bakes • Gifts • Raffle**

10am – 12pm

Raising funds in aid of



Northumberland County Blind Association



Make a difference – support our services

The Northumberland County Blind Association is a registered charity and depends on outside help for many of its activities. We are greatly helped by our team of volunteers as well as many people that support us financially. If you would like to help by: volunteering, fundraising, making a donation, being actively involved with one of our committees, making a bequest, joining our 100 club, please contact us on 01670 514316.

If you pay income tax, your donation can be worth 25% more to us just by completing and enclosing the slip below with your donation:

“I want to Gift Aid my donation of £_____ to NCBA. I am a UK tax payer and understand that if I pay less Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax in the current tax year than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations it is my responsibility to pay any difference.”

Name: _____

Address: _____

_____ **Postcode:** _____

Signature _____ **Date:** _____

Please call **01670 514316** or email **info@ncba.org.uk** if you would like to contribute an article or make a comment on anything you have read in this newsletter.

NoISe stands for “Northumberland Information Service for people with vision impairment”. NoISe is a free publication that is produced in large-print, Braille, audio and via email. We aim to give you news about NCBA and useful general information. To the best of our knowledge all articles are correct at the time of going to print. If you know someone who would be interested in receiving NoISe or if this newsletter is inappropriately addressed please let us know.

Leave a legacy gift in your Will

Leaving us a gift in your Will, however large or small, will help to provide a range of support services to people who are registered blind and partially sighted living in Northumberland. By remembering us in your Will you can help to ensure that our services continue into the future.

We recommend that you seek professional advice when drawing up your Will. We do not provide financial or legal advice. If you wish to find a solicitor please visit the following website:

www.lawsociety.org.uk or telephone 0870 606 2555. For further information on how to set up a personal legacy account, visit the following website: **www.cafonline.org/my-personal-giving**. The Will site provides a complete online service for writing a Will at **www.thewillsite.co.uk**

Address

Reiver House
Staithes Lane
Morpeth
Northumberland
NE61 1TD

Contact Us

Telephone: 01670 514316
Email: info@ncba.org.uk
Website: www.ncba.org.uk



@ncba_volunteer



www.facebook.com/NcbaReiverhouse



Registered Charity Number: 1102386