

# Sheffield Royal Society for the Blind Rotherham Sight & Sound Cairn Home

## INSIGHT AUTUMN 2023

Providing opportunity, support, friendship and services to people with sight and/or hearing loss in the Sheffield & Rotherham area, helping them to achieve whatever they wish to do and whatever they aspire to be.

- Introduction ..... 2**
- SRSB & RSS News..... 3**
- Services ..... 6**
- Cairn Home..... 14**
- Awareness ..... 15**
- Feedback ..... 18**
- Volunteering ..... 20**
- Fundraising ..... 21**

# Introduction

Where has the year gone? I cannot believe that summer is almost over. It's been such a busy year so far with lots of new and exciting projects, the main one being our **RSS** refurbishment. We're pleased to say this is almost finished and we're hopeful that we will be able to reopen our Ship Hill centre very soon. We're really excited, as the work that's been done will enable us to offer so much more to our clients in Rotherham. The lift will make the whole building accessible giving us space to expand our groups and activities. The café will be a lovely social hub for people to meet with friends and enjoy a bite to eat and the ramped entrance will enable everyone to access the building safely. We've got lots of exciting things planned so we can't wait to get back in there and welcome everyone back.

We've also been busy at **Cairn Home**, our residential care home. We continue to upgrade the rooms and have now had three new wet rooms installed. The team have also done a fantastic make-over on the dining room and office. The garden continues to be the showpiece of the home with lots of hard work going into its upkeep.

Another big project has been the development of our new website. This is still ongoing but hopefully this will be finished in the next few months. We've engaged a group of clients to feed into the project and to help us test accessibility. We're really looking forward to sharing it with you all.

As part of our strategic plan we've been busy gathering information to ensure we are developing a service that meets your needs and deals with the issues that are important to you. We want to ensure we consult with as many people as possible, your input and feedback is very important to us. A big thank you to everyone who completed our questionnaire that went out with our last newsletter (more on that later).

In June we held a party to say thank you to all our wonderful volunteers. We really appreciate all their hard work and commitment. We really couldn't do what we do without them. We've had a few staff changes over the last few months and we said a fond farewell to Rosie, Tony, Annette and Clare who all moved on to pastures new. We welcomed Amy Needham as our new Deaf/Deafblind Services Coordinator and Graham Wright as our new Finance Assistant.

We hope you enjoy reading our Insight Newsletter, we'd love to get your feedback so please do share any comments or thoughts with us.

Joanne Ardern  
**CEO of SRSB, RSS and Cairn**

## **SRSB & RSS News**

### **How to Access What's On at SRSB and RSS:**

We have so much happening it can be hard to keep up! However, there are lots of ways to find out:

- Online via our website Client Events page (events are listed in date order): [www.srsb.org.uk/client-events.aspx](http://www.srsb.org.uk/client-events.aspx)
- Our Service Leaflets explain the specific details of services offered by SRSB, RSS and Cairn and are available in printed or digital format
- Monthly large print activities list or email version (events listed by activity or group)
- Large print notice board in Cafe at SRSB with 'What's On this Week' that also has a QR code to link you to the list online
- Contact us by phone 0114 272 2757 or 01709 722 420
- Email us at [info@srsb.org.uk](mailto:info@srsb.org.uk)

Because we provide many services at many different points in our clients' pathway with **SRSB/RSS/Cairn**, we're approaching our newsletter differently in order to highlight examples of these, and how they have made a difference. We hope you find them interesting, whilst illustrating what our charity offers. We're a small passionate team working hard together to support our clients across Sheffield and Rotherham. We also work together with our amazing supporters to raise funds in order to keep on providing these services locally. Our independent charity has been in Sheffield since 1860, and more recently in Rotherham since 2017, and we need to continue our work in to the future.

## **Meet the Team**

**Sarah:** "Hi I'm Sarah. I joined **SRSB** in 2006 as a Community Advice Officer (CAO). I was promoted to CAO Team Leader in 2021 and then changed my job title recently to Community Support Manager. In my spare time, I enjoy the great outdoors and spending time with family and friends and like to keep active walking my dog Monty.

In my new role of Community Services Manager, I schedule appointments for initial assessments, follow up queries and telephone calls out to our fantastic team of eight CAO's and one Community Support Worker. I'm also the main point of contact for referrals from the Eye Clinic Liaison Officer (based at the Hallamshire Hospital).

I organise regular team meetings which are vital to support our CAO team who, whilst having a rewarding job, may be visiting people who are struggling more than others to navigate their diagnosis. However, we all remain passionate to make sure that everything is in place to support our clients on their sight and/or hearing loss journey. Ultimately, our reward is enabling people by ensuring the appropriate support is in place.

I also order all the assistive equipment that is available for our clients and do regular stocktakes.

Networking with external organisations is also important as it helps build community links which enables our clients to get the best possible service tailored to them and their particular requirements.

I recently initiated a Stroke Support Group which has been a great success and I'm currently handing over the role of facilitator to a client who has become a volunteer.

I feel privileged to work for such an amazing charity to help support our wonderful clients."

**Rob:** "Hello. My name is Robert, and I am the Equipment Advisor at **SRSB/RSS**. I started with **SRSB** in March 2014 and I have now been with the charity for 9 years, When I started, my job title was Equipment Centre Coordinator, this carried on until the pandemic, and then after the pandemic the job became Equipment Advisor and I now spend a lot of time talking on the phone and making appointments with clients, to discuss equipment and what might help them. The advice I can give can vary enormously in scope and complexity, it could be simple, such as talking about felt pens and appropriate coloured paper to allow the person to read what they have written, or at the other end of the scale we could be talking about applications on smart devices that encompass artificial intelligence and how they can best use it.

One of the most rewarding parts of my job is when you encourage a newly diagnosed person to realise that sight loss is not the end of the world, it's the start of a new journey, and it's one we can take together.

I work closely with all staff at **SRSB/RSS**, but especially Sarah, head of the wonderful Community Advice Officer team. A typical day is meeting the people I have made appointments with to discuss their needs and equipment, but also to talk on the phone with clients who ring us directly, and also those who just walk into the building after being seen by the hospital and diagnosed with a sight condition.

On days when we have events in the building I can be found helping to set up, and then talking to the clients who come in to attend the events. This can be one of the best parts of the job as the people who attend regularly are not just clients, but they are friends. I could honestly say that I have never worked anywhere where on a day-to-day basis every day is different. But, it is the most fun I have ever had. And I am truly thankful for the time I've been here."

## Services

For any of the services featured below or any of our other services, you can call us on Sheffield: **0114 272 2757**, Rotherham: **01709 722 420**, or **info@srsb.org.uk** to find out more or to book. Most are available to our clients with both sight and/or hearing loss unless specified. **SRSB/RSS** and **Cairn** clients are welcome to access services in both Sheffield and Rotherham.

**Gone (VI) Fishing!** Our monthly Youth Group has had several exciting activities over the year, and recently our Children & Family Support Officer (Hannah) arranged a session with the British Disabled Angling Association out at Ladybower Reservoir in Derbyshire, where they had a go at accessible fishing and also got to drive the power boats. It was a hit with the young people who took part and two of them are planning to return independently following this visit.

We spoke to Amber, one of our young clients, who said "It was really fun, and because I will never be able to drive a car, I particularly enjoyed being able to drive the boat. I didn't catch any fish this time, but my goal is to catch a rainbow trout!" In fact Amber has returned already and will be going again soon. Amber's Mum also commented, "It was so lovely to see Amber's confidence grow, she seemed a bit nervous to start with, but then she drove the boat and you could see she was having fun. She

was on such a high afterwards. We didn't know that this existed as an opportunity, even though we had been to Ladybower lots of times and love it there. So to be in the middle of the reservoir and see it from a different perspective was amazing. We were discussing on the way home how we would probably never have done this if it wasn't for Amber's sight condition and we were really thankful we had the opportunity, it was very special.

Some examples of activities we've done and have planned this year are: boardgame café, slime workshop, animal park farm (grooming and feeding goats and ponies!), arts and crafts and pizza making. In addition to this, we also have plans to bring in other clients who lead local VI sports activities to allow our young people to take part whilst also allowing them to meet VI role models who are leading local projects.

Our next sessions will be rock climbing and a trip to Alton Towers, so if you are one of our young clients (or a parent of) and would like to find out more, just get in touch with Hannah:

**[cyp@srsb.org.uk](mailto:cyp@srsb.org.uk)**

**VI Look Ahead Revamp** These workshops will now run each month at **SRSB** and **RSS**.

Aimed at newly registered clients, and clients who are experiencing changes in their sight loss, this two and a half day course covers daily living skills, technology, mobility and the emotional impact of sight loss.

We'll have guest speakers, including clients who have done the course previously to explain how it helped them, as well as speakers from other organisations. The group is run by a range of **SRSB** and **RSS** staff and introduces our charity and how it works to support clients.

The overall outcome is hoped to be lasting relationships, access to both our sites in Sheffield and Rotherham as well as the wider community, creating social inclusion.

Raising confidence through information and knowledge, we aim to promote independence and wellbeing in a safe environment. If you think you might benefit from signing up for the course, please contact Sarah or Tracy for a friendly chat and more information. This service is also highlighted at the registration stage.

### **HumanWare Demo Day** Tuesday 19th September.

We're really looking forward to our latest demo day, this time from a company called HumanWare. HumanWare specialise in the design and manufacture of highly intuitive and intelligent solutions for people living with vision impairment. From electronic magnifiers, to talking GPS, to braille devices, HumanWare solutions help users live independently.

They have an expanding range of portable magnifiers that will change the way you read wherever you are.

They're also holding a special offer on some of their product range exclusively for this event, so if you'd like to come along and try some of their products, please call us to book time with their representatives. You can also drop in, but please be aware you may have to wait if you haven't booked a time slot.

### **New Foot Health Practitioner**

Since our visiting Podiatrist, Emma, left a while ago, we've been trying to find another provider and are delighted to let you know we have a new Foot Health Practitioner called Amy, booked for the first Wed of each month beginning 6th Sept.

Price: £20 per session

Services include:

- Toe and finger nail cutting
- Corns/calluses treatment
- Ingrowing toenail treatment
- Cracked heel treatment

She is a fully trained and qualified foot health practitioner, also trained in diabetic foot health.

Please arrange an appointment directly with Amy: 07581 308 588.

## **Miss Saigon Touch Tour**

Touch Tours are a fantastic way to orientate our VI clients to an accessible production at the theatre. Many of you will have taken advantage of this service, but for those who aren't aware of them, we asked one of our clients to share her experience of them.

Our Culture Club Group went to Sheffield Theatres production of Miss Saigon which everyone thoroughly enjoyed and just before the performance the group accessed the Touch Tour.

Trish told us, "We were told about the set and felt it, we were told how it would move and where actors would be entering the stage. We got to feel the costumes and were amazed by how well made they were (we realised how tiny one of the characters was too from her costume!). We also felt some of the props. I had been to a Touch Tour for another performance of a ballet and that was also incredible, it really helps to do this beforehand as we then listen to the audio description during the performance and it helps with potential visual clues that we might miss. I would recommend to others to make use of these sessions, they really do enhance the performance."

Our Culture Club visits accessible performances at the theatre every month and also runs trips to other interesting venues such as museums and galleries etc. If you are interested in hearing about these trips, please contact Liz on [activities@srsb.org.uk](mailto:activities@srsb.org.uk) to be added to the mailing list, or call us.

## **Travelling Theatre visit to SRSB in Sept**

We've organised an accessible theatre performance at our Mappin Street Centre from a travelling theatre called Mikron Theatre who produce accessible shows

They will be performing 'Twitchers'. So nest(le) down with Mikron in this flight through RSPB history, feathered with birdsong and laughter. You'll be giggling from heron in and you won't 'egret coming!

Please call us to book or to find out more. **Wed 20th Sept, 1 to 3pm**

**ECLO's (Eye Clinic Liaison Officers)** Our ECLOs are the first point of contact via the Hallamshire Hospital in Sheffield for many newly registered clients. One of our clients, Graham, explains his journey from his first contact with the ECLO through to becoming a staff member at **SRSB/RSS** recently. Graham joined us as Finance Assistant in July this year having retired as a legal practice manager in 2021.

"My journey to **SRSB/RSS** began this year as a client. Although my sight impairment is from birth I obtained a Certificate of Visual Impairment in February this year (that's another story!). The consultant did the usual referrals and in due course I received a telephone call from an ECLO based at the hospital. I have previous experience of employment assistance via Access to Work but knew little about what support might be out there for me out of employment.

My ECLO, Clare contacted me by telephone at home. She was really helpful, asking the right questions and outlining the services and options available.

I consented to Clare passing my details on to **SRSB/RSS** and after a few weeks Schani (Community Advice Officer) got in contact and visited me at home. Schani's advice and support that followed has been brilliant, covering a full range of practical aids, benefits advice and the **SRSB/RSS** activities available. He skilfully ascertained that I was interested in working part-time for a local charity and sent me details of the Finance Assistant role when it was advertised, and the rest is history!"

**Cafe Update** We're really looking forward to having a shiny new Cafe at our refurbished **RSS** Centre soon, but in the meantime, we only have our lovely Cafe VIPs at our Sheffield Centre where Pamela has recently added some more vegetarian options including some amazing beetroot burgers. We are still offering free Cream Teas (cuppa and a scone) on Mondays from 12pm to 1pm, this will be reverting back to the free Winter Warmers in Autumn (bowl of soup with a roll and drink).

### **Showdown Proves a Big Hit**

We were ahead of the game when we ordered our Showdown table thanks to a recommendation from one of our young clients Klaudia. At the time we received the table earlier this year, we were only aware of one other in the country (in Croydon). In fact since we took delivery of the table it has grown in popularity across the country. Showdown has proved to be a big hit with our clients and is a fast-paced game that could be described as a cross between table tennis and air hockey, where all the players wear a blindfold to take part.

Klaudia tells us "I first became aware of the game when I was at a residential school in Warsaw. They had a table and I knew about it but I had never played it back then. One of my friends was very successful and was in fact at the IBSA Games in Birmingham recently.

When I moved to Sheffield, I remembered his enthusiasm and discussed my idea with Steve, **SRSB/RSS** Fundraising Manager, who secured funding from the Yorkshire Sport Foundation to have a table built and shipped to the UK.

Now we have a group of people who are regular players. I enjoy the game and I feel proud of myself and the others and I feel really happy to see people enjoy themselves and to know it was worth it! I would really recommend anyone to give it a go and it's great for any age."

When asked how her game was, she modestly said “There are a lot of good players but I think I am making progress and I win sometimes!”

We are hoping that we may be able to look into having one at **RSS** when that reopens after the refurb too!

We have many different activities that we facilitate or that we support and also offer transport to some.

Please get in touch if you would like to find out more:

[activities@srsb.org.uk](mailto:activities@srsb.org.uk)

## **VI Baseball Home Win!**

We are delighted about the success of the Sheffield Strikers VI Baseball team who recently won a tournament on home ground at Dinnington. It was their first tournament win after playing at Manchester and Liverpool tournaments previously.

The team came together as the ‘Sheffield Strikers’ earlier this year after a group developed and grew in numbers over the previous few months. We helped them to source funding and to get the team established, and our staff and volunteers have supported them along the way by providing transport and assisting as sighted guides.

This joint working has resulted in a team who are now going from strength to strength and Sheffield Strikers are looking the business in

their stylish new team strip too!

Jordan, Founder of the group, that also encompasses Showdown, says “We created Sheffield Strikers to bring the blind community together and create a community where people can feel valued, safe, motivated and to keep fit and active. I always believe you can achieve anything and I don’t believe a disability is a disability, I just think we do things differently.

Mick is their Chair and he adds “Jordan and myself had experience and training playing in Italy last year for UKBBA (UK British Blind Baseball Association). It’s been a challenge but we

are getting stronger each game. It's a team full of diversity: gender, ethnicity and age. We've built Sheffield Strikers to compete with teams across the UK and I'm proud to be part of it. We all have a lot of fun but we are very serious when we get on the diamond!"

## **Hearing Impairment Services**

We have recently taken on another member of staff at **RSS** who is called Amy. Amy is proficient in BSL (British Sign Language) and will be a great addition to our team. She will be developing a Hearing Impairment Awareness Training package too.

**Stroke Support Group Development:** We identified the requirement for a Stroke Support Group because several of our clients have a vision impairment as a result of having a stroke. Our Community Support Manager, Sarah, was committed to making this happen and the group has gone from strength to strength and evolved into an established and supportive environment for participants.

Sarah is now in the process of handing over the facilitation of the group to volunteer Sandra who herself had a stroke and has a vision impairment. Sandra says, "I used to run groups in my previous career, so to have the encouragement to build my confidence back up to help others has been great. I found my vision loss the hardest thing to accept and get on top of, but I have other challenges as a result of the stroke and have found that in the group we all support each other and share tips with each other. You never feel that you are on your own and we are all there for each other."

## **Wellbeing Sessions**

We are running group sessions called 'Feel Good Tuesdays' for anyone wanting to improve their mental and overall health. These

are theme based and hopefully include some professional input on the chosen theme.

Our first group in July was with Chris the aromatherapist and reflexologist who also visits our Centre to provide this service. She brought oils in for us to smell and talked about the benefits of massage and also offered some taster hand massages.

We spoke to Jean who attended this session and she said “Chris was very good at explaining and I felt enlightened by hearing about this. I had a hand massage which was lovely. The group setting was great because some people were asking things that I wouldn’t have thought to ask and it prompted lots of different conversations.” Another client Violet said “I booked appointments for a shoulder and neck massage and then a face massage afterwards and they were great.”

Everyone who attended received a free gift that Lush had donated from their range.

Some of the other themes we will cover are: Healthy Eating, Exercise, Alternative Therapy, how to improve how you feel. Any ideas or suggestions you would like to see please let us know.

## **Cairn Home**

### **Aloha Summer Fun!**

Our care home in Crosspool has a team dedicated to providing high quality residential care, specialising in care for people with sight loss. We’re continually organising activities for our residents and in the summer enjoyed a Hawaiian themed party in our lovely outside space. We had a letter from one of our resident’s daughters saying “Dear all, thank you for our Hawaiian Afternoon it was great fun. We all thoroughly enjoyed it and appreciate all the work that goes into putting such a good party on. Look forward to the next one!”

### **Miniature Pony Visit!**

Another activity enjoyed at Cairn Home was a visit from some miniature ponies (pictured) They're gentle and affectionate and our residents loved meeting them! They have therapeutic benefits to elderly people and they were certainly a hit with our residents!

Amongst many other activities, residents also have the chance to take part in friendship groups at local pubs in Crosspool and evening meals at local pubs. We have several residents wanting to join the trips to the theatre too!

### **New Baby!**

Congratulations to Cairn Home staff member Sonia who had a baby girl in August!

If you'd like to find out more about Cairn, please get in touch:  
**0114 266 1536** or **cairn@srsb.org.uk**

## **Awareness**

We collaborate with several other organisations raising awareness about issues faced by our clients, and also to raise awareness of our work and range of services.

This is with the aim of improving our clients' experience in the local community, for example in shops, cafes, museums, art galleries, hospitals, transport and many, many more services locally. If you're interested in being notified directly about any meetings, consultations, research or focus groups we take part in, or other events, please let us know: **info@srsb.org.uk**

### **Hospital Research Group**

Over the last few months we formed a client group to support research by the School of Allied Health Professions, Nursing and Midwifery, at the University of Sheffield. The aim was to explore and understand how vision impairment (or low vision) can impact

on inpatients during a hospital stay. It was very productive and we are delighted that through our group's feedback and the facilitators' implementation, the result is some very helpful information in the form of:

1. Tips for healthcare staff and how they can help a vision impaired patient when they are in hospital.
2. Tips for patients and family members for a hospital visit if someone has a vision impairment.

Well done to everyone in the team, and to our clients who gave their thoughts - it has resulted in something very powerful that will hopefully make a big difference.

This information is available for us to use and send out. If you would like a copy please get in touch [info@srsb.org.uk](mailto:info@srsb.org.uk)

## **Taxi Driver Disability Training**

We have been aware of the need to improve disability training for taxi drivers locally and have previously worked on visual impairment awareness training, however in July '22 we began a process to address this more systematically and in collaboration with other local organisations representing people with other disabilities. We held focus groups to bring together a cross section of clients following a spate of troublesome incidents with taxi services. Our clients were facing issues such as guide dog users being left at the side of the road, drivers incorrectly claiming they were exempt from carrying dogs and poor levels of customer service in relation to the VI status of clients.

We also wanted to understand the issue from both sides and using the findings of our group we consulted with Sheffield Council Taxi Licensing to discuss the issues. Following discussion with the Licensing Authority we offered to provide awareness training for taxi drivers. The council liked the idea and asked us to develop a new disability awareness training package that provided a broad training suite to meet the needs of not just VI but a range of disabilities.

We engaged with the local organisations Disability Sheffield, Safe Spaces and Sheffield College (who provide training to new drivers) to identify and produce a new bespoke course that sets out the driver duties under the Equality Act 2010 and recent changes that provide additional protection for assistance dogs. The training package consists of testimonials from service users about their lived experiences alongside a range of blended learning materials to illustrate the legal, social and moral implications of providing good customer service to VI clients. In relation to VI we've provided advice on effective sighted guiding techniques, best practice for carrying guide dogs and the legal rights of VI passengers.

We've reviewed and piloted the training, ensuring that we've produced a package that doesn't duplicate content having identified what each partner organisation could bring to the table to produce the best possible content. **SRSB/RSS** focused on issues relating to VI, Disability Sheffield took the lead on Mobility and Access issues, Safe Spaces have assessed the needs of people who may be considered vulnerable and Sheffield College have provided the structure and framework for the content alongside the assessment of drivers.

The partnership organisations continue to work together and share responsibility for delivery and provide speakers with lived experience to make the content as compelling and realistic as possible.

The Council have implemented the mandatory training we have devised and it will be delivered to both new drivers seeking their license for the first time and as part of the licensing renewal process ensuring that eventually all Sheffield licensed drivers will have done this training. We hope this will lead to improved customer experiences.

## **Heritage Update**

We have just taken delivery of the first print run of our detailed history books.

Our Chair, Richard Frost, donated a lot of his time to researching and pulling this together and we want to say a huge thank you to him. This print run was funded by the Heritage Lottery and the objective is to distribute to local organisations and supporters to raise awareness of our charity's work. We are also in the process of having an audio version of the book recorded and this is available for any clients who are interested in listening to this. Please contact us on [marketing@srsb.org.uk](mailto:marketing@srsb.org.uk) or give us a call.

## **Heritage and Sensory Garden**

Jason Turpin-Thomson has sculpted the Covid memory boulder and poem and is located in our new sensory garden at Graves Park in Sheffield (in the rose garden in front of the cafe). This poem reflects Sheffield's visually impaired community's thoughts on the Covid pandemic. It was written by The Mappin Writers, **SRSB**'s creative writing group, who meet every Friday morning at our Centre. It was part of a wider project run by Sheffield City Council and Compassionate Sheffield to enable local communities to come together and reflect on their experiences from the pandemic.

## **Local Heritage Displays**

We've just finished a two week display in Sheffield Cathedral about our 163 year history with Sheffield. We want to thank all the local organisations who have supported us over the last year and to everyone who visited the displays and gave us feedback. Also our appreciation goes to the Heritage Fund with thanks to National Lottery players for enabling these displays.

## **Feedback**

### **Hear about it from our clients. Jackie:**

Jackie found friendship, a talent for sport and a new zest for life when she came to one of the 'Look Ahead Information

Workshops' at **SRSB** in Sheffield, and all of them were quite a surprise to her.

"I was referred here from the hospital and didn't know what to expect. I met Rob, their Equipment Advisor and discovered there are lots of things you can get to help you".

But the event that transformed Jackie's life was the Look Ahead session as she says "That's where it all started. I sat opposite two ladies, both called Jean "We introduced ourselves and I hit it off with both of them and we are now great friends." The trio have become well known in the **SRSB** Centre regularly coming to the Coffee Morning, Craft Group and playing the sport of Curling. When we chat, Jackie has just done a craft session. 'We had a demonstration today from a lady called Katie who is completely blind and very talented. She showed us a way of painting on canvas where the paint is spread across. There will be four of us in each team making them. When they are finished, they will be used to decorate **RSS**, which is currently being renovated."

After playing indoor curling at the Centre Jackie goes each week to play snooker at The Stephen Harrison Academy Attercliffe. She had never played before, but it turned out she was very good and has won a medal.

Aside from those regular activities Jackie needs her diary to remind her of all the other **SRSB** and **RSS** events she has taken part in recently. They include a visit to the National Arboretum, an exhibition at Sight Village in Birmingham, a trip to Bridlington, another to Bury market and going to see Miss Saigon at Sheffield Theatres.

"This place is amazing, just amazing, I recommend anyone to come here. My granddaughter says I have a better social life than she does," said Jackie. "The friendships I have made here are very important."

Jackie also attends the Charles Bonnet Syndrome Support Group and was recently interviewed on BBC Radio Sheffield by Toby Foster to help raise awareness about this condition. "When you are in the Support Group people talk to you about it and then you

don't feel so alone." She says, referring to the condition that can be a result of having sight loss.

Jackie also finds time to take part in collection days for **SRSB** and **RSS**, and has volunteered at Atkinson's in Sheffield city centre.

But her biggest sporting challenge is still to come. Her son Matthew is about to go on a Zip Line to raise funds for **SRSB** and **RSS**. Jackie isn't certain that at 76 she will pass the health checks, but she says "If I can, I am going to do it with him. I didn't do any of these sports and activities before. Joining **SRSB/RSS** has been life-changing."

(UPDATE) Jackie is doing the Zip Line!!

## Volunteering

We'd like to send out a big thank you to all our wonderful volunteers who continue to give so much. The time, effort, and support provided by our volunteers benefits our clients enormously in all areas.

We'd also like to say a big thank you to everyone who attended our volunteer appreciation party, it was great to see so many happy smiling people get together and share their experiences and memories. A great time was had by all! One of our volunteer team sent this letter afterwards "Hi Andrea. Just a little note to say a big thank you for all your time and effort you gave for our special volunteer get together. My friend also enjoyed meeting so many new people. Thank you also to everyone else who helped you.

Of course I loved my special certificate and badge. Keep up the good work and the 3 'Js' are ready to help if possible. See ya!

Jean (2)."

Our Befriending Service continues to reach out and connect with over 100 Clients on a weekly basis, keeping them updated with all our services and activities.

Our Befriending Coffee Mornings are going well and we welcomed two new members to the group in August. Our next

Befrienders meet up will be in October, we are hoping to have a group outing to Weston Park Museum Café for lunch, please keep an eye out for your invitation.

Our My Guide Service although still in its early days is up and running with 4 successful matches who meet regularly for walks. We are actively looking for volunteers to grow and expand in all areas at **SRSB/RSS**. We welcome volunteers from all backgrounds and communities.

Please contact Andrea at [volunteers@srsb.org.uk](mailto:volunteers@srsb.org.uk) for more information on volunteer opportunities or give us a call.

## Fundraising

Our Fundraising Events are open to anyone to join. You can book online at [www.srsb.org.uk/fundraising-events.aspx](http://www.srsb.org.uk/fundraising-events.aspx) call Steve on **0114 272 2757** or email [fundraising@srsb.org.uk](mailto:fundraising@srsb.org.uk)

The events we hold are a critical source of income for our local independent charity and help us to provide our services now and into the future in Sheffield and Rotherham.

Many people think that we are a branch of a national charity, but that is not the case, we are a small dedicated team providing a wide range of services locally. We collaborate with national charities as appropriate on projects such as awareness and campaigning and we recommend their equipment and services as appropriate, however, **SRSB** and **RSS** are the primary source of services and support for people with sight loss in Sheffield and sight/hearing loss in Rotherham.

If you can support our team with fundraising or can help us to spread the word to your family, friends, companies or organisations where you or they work, it will help us to continue making a huge difference.

Our remaining events this year are:

**Charity Golf Day:** Friday 15th Sept. First tee off 9:30am.  
Playing at the fabulous Dore & Totley Golf Club.

**Pub Quiz:** Thursday 21st Sept. 7:30pm The Old Queen's Head Sheffield.

Join us for a bit of quiz fun at the Old Queen's Head in Sheffield.

**Sheffield 10K:** Sunday 26th Sept.

Raising funds and awareness for **SRSB** and **RSS** with fundraising support from us.

**Blind Drive:** Thurs 12th Oct. 9am to 5pm. Sheffield Arena Car Park A.

This event is open to all whether you are blind, visually impaired or sighted, from 11 years of age (blind and visually impaired drivers would not be required to wear a blindfold).

Are you up for a challenge?

Then sign up for this event!

£20 entry fee, then raise sponsorship of £50. Places are limited so hurry!

One of our clients Mike told us about when he took part in a previous Blind Drive. "I loved it! I am blind and have never had a licence, so to feel the wheel of a car in your hands and the bite of the gears changing was incredible. I would thoroughly recommend to others to have a go, it's brilliant!"

**SWFC v Rotherham United Football Collection:** 28th Oct.

1 to 3pm. If you'd like to support us by collecting prior to the game there will be a match ticket available to our collectors. Hurry, places are limited.

**SRSB/RSS & SYVITC Quiz Night** Thurs 9th Nov. 7:30pm at **SRSB**. Joint fundraiser with South Yorkshire Visually Impaired Tennis Club. Join us for a great night out!

**Pub Quiz:** Thursday 30th Nov 7:30pm The Old Queen's Head Sheffield. Yes, we're mentioning Christmas! A date for your diaries. Join us for a bit of festive fun at the Old Queen's Head in Sheffield.

### **Summer Raffle**

Thank you so much to everyone who supported this, we raised nearly £2,000!

Well done to all the winners and if you haven't already received your prize it will be on its way.

Our next raffle will be the Christmas raffle arriving with the Winter newsletter.

### **Grant and Trusts**

We've applied for many grants from trusts to support different projects and services we are developing and while we aren't always successful, we have been very lucky to receive support from several.

For example, we secured a grant to raise awareness of our work in Sheffield and received funding for some of the sports groups we are supporting. Our children and family service has received funding for the youth club enabling us to offer fantastic experiences for our young clients, and our Daily Living Rehabilitation Officer role has also been supported. These are just a few examples of support to develop and maintain our services and we want to thank everyone for the difference they have made. Many grant applications can be complex and involve a lot of teamwork to provide information for the case for support, the application itself, and the feedback afterwards. They involve the input of clients, volunteers and staff. Thank you to everyone

who supports this and also to the grant makers who ultimately bring our projects to life. We love to invite trusts and charity teams along to see the difference they have made and to meet the people who benefit from their donations.

## **Legacies**

We are forever grateful to everyone who chooses to support our charity in their will. Our charity came about in 1860, because of a gift in a will and this continues to be important to our charity today. We offer a range of options including a free will service with Guardian Angel and discounted wills with a panel of local solicitors and we are running a **Free Will Week** from 16th to 20th October. Just get in touch with Steve if you want to find out more.

## **Our Local Communities**

We are always amazed by the kindness within our communities. From the stores who support our collections, the local groups who hold fundraising activities and helping us to raise awareness. We have developed and maintain many relationships with local groups and they play a very important part in our charity's work. A big thank you to them too.

## **And Finally...**

To all the incredible individuals who approach us with lots of ingenious ideas to raise funds to support our clients. For example, Robert, who has been busking for us for months and also held a concert for us with several other musicians.

## **2024 is Around the Corner!**

We'll soon be planning lots of exciting events for next year. If you want to know more, please get in touch and we can add you to a mailing list. Some of our events have got booked up quite quickly, but if we know you are interested we may be able to expand the capacity of some.

If you'd like to support the continued work of **SRSB** and **RSS** you can donate here by scanning this QR Code (pictured below).

## **Questionnaire:**

A big thank you to everyone who took the time to fill in the VI client questionnaire that we sent with the last newsletter. Your feedback is extremely important to us and will help us keep in touch with issues that are important to you and focus our service development. We'll be sending more questionnaires for a bit more detail in future newsletters.

These were your responses in order of importance:

- Confidence and independence
- Travel and getting around.
- The use of technology and equipment for daily living)
- The emotional impact of adjusting to sight loss (or to changes in sight loss)
- Guidance and signposting when needed (at the early stages of your diagnosis or at times of change to sight loss)
- Assistance with benefits and cost of living
- Leisure/social activities (eg Day trips, craft groups, coffee mornings, painting etc)
- Making friends and connections
- Being with others in a similar situation
- Sharing my experience to help others
- Support Groups
- Hearing about and being involved in local accessibility issues, being involved in focus groups and giving feedback
- Culture groups (trips, theatre, galleries, museums)
- Diet and healthy eating
- Sports for leisure (eg for exercise and wellbeing)
- Education and/or training
- Employment

- Competitive sports

### **Newsletter by Email?**

You could choose to receive our quarterly newsletter by email or memory stick to help us cut down on printing costs.

Please email [marketing@srsb.org.uk](mailto:marketing@srsb.org.uk) from the email you would like us to use and let us know that you are happy to receive it in this way or by memory stick. We would really appreciate it. Thank you.

### **Poem for a Friend**

We're always saddened to hear about our friends passing away and wanted to share a very moving poem from one of our volunteers in the **SRSB** Creative Writing Group.

This poem is dedicated to Mike and demonstrates the special bonds that are established within our groups:

#### **A Tribute to Mike, by Bill (Mappin Writers)**

It was a pleasure to have known Mike  
I feel honoured to have met this man  
And to have shared for such a brief period of time  
Our lives and thoughts and quiet conversation  
He was not brash, he was not loud  
He listened to others, he gave others a chance  
He waited to be invited, he never did demand  
Such knowledge he had on so many subjects  
He shared his life with us, he'd write the facts, not the fiction  
We all knew that when his work was read out  
That we'd all learn something new  
His attention to detail and accuracy was all important  
Indeed, he was a man of his word, he was noble

I remember him once taking us all on a journey  
A journey through our memories and minds  
We all walked together through the streets of Sheffield  
We looked back at the glory days of Steel City  
The shops, the industries, the pubs and the people  
A talented and very much loved and respected man  
Farewell my friend, I wish I could've got to know you better  
Enjoy the next part of your life's journey, hold on tight Sir  
We'll never forget you for all the right reasons  
And of course, we'll all meet up again, in the end.

### **Sheffield Royal Society for the Blind (SRSB)**

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**E:** [info@srsb.org.uk](mailto:info@srsb.org.uk)

**Web:** [www.srsb.org.uk](http://www.srsb.org.uk)

### **Cairn Home**

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Crosspool

Sheffield S10 5ND

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**E:** [cairn@srsb.org.uk](mailto:cairn@srsb.org.uk)

**Web:** [www.cairnhome.org.uk](http://www.cairnhome.org.uk)

### **Rotherham Sight & Sound**

8 Ship Hill

Rotherham S60 2HG

**Tel:** 01709 722420

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*Registered charity number 1047257*